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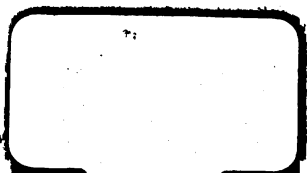
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1862

VICTORIA,

AS I FOUND IT,

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* DURING FIVE YEARS OF ADVENTURE,

IN MELBOURNE, ON THE ROADS, AND THE GOLD
FIELDS; WITH AN ACCOUNT OF QUARTZ MINING,
AND THE GREAT RUSH TO MOUNT ARARAT
AND PLEASANT CREEK.

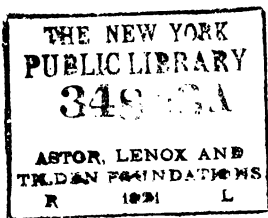
BY

* HENRY BROWN.

WELBECK STREET
CAVENDISH SQUARE
LONDON

London:
T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1862.

V. K. M.



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VICTORIA, AS I FOUND IT.

CHAPTER I.

ON the 17th of July, 1853, I placed my foot on board the Dutch iron ship "California," which was to carry me far away from England, even to the gold-bearing land of Australia. The fever of emigration was then at its height, and our vessel was crammed with passengers. To myself this mattered but little, for I had paid for my berth, and could not legally be turned out; it was however very different with our

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Clergyman, he had been *promised* a first class passage for himself, wife, and three sickly children, but by some means or another the brokers managed to place him among the second class, and the poor man's wife being ill, he was compelled to cook and work and play the part of nurse to three young sickly children; this was not exactly the right position for a clergyman and a gentleman. He was a sad looking man, and it somewhat took away from his sacerdotal appearance to see him carrying a net of potatoes to be boiled, getting his hook-pot of soup, which would sometimes play him sad pranks, or waiting his turn among a crowd of rough emigrants to get his pie or pudding cooked. His whole party soon looked wretched enough, and I shall not soon forget his sad appearance when he presented himself on the poop, and asked for an extra allowance of flour for his poor little sick children. All voyages are very similar, and need but little description; mine was however very nearly brought to an untimely end. We

had rounded the Cape, and with a strong wind right aft, and studding sails all set, hoped soon to see the land of promise. When I went on deck that morning everything looked well, and yet my fate hung upon a thread. I was nodding my good mornings, when the spanker sail flapped, and in coming back struck me, and the brail falling across my chest, pitched me right overboard. I threw up my hands, and fortunately caught hold of the brail, I heard an indistinct sound of "hold on," just as if I should not do so like grim death. My feeling was, that if the sail flapped again it would knock me away from my hold, but one of the passengers quickly rushed to the side, and pulled me on board. It is my idea that I came up with a smile on my face, but the rest of the passengers stood just as I had left them, with their mouths wide open, and looking as white as sheets. The Dutch mate, a queer looking little fellow, who seemed to have been quite paralyzed with fright, exclaimed, spreading his hands over

the lower regions, "Oh you have giv me such a pain;" and if I had fallen into the water, my chance would have been but small. To have put the vessel at once about would very likely have taken the masts out of her, and even then before a boat could have been lowered I should have been miles away from the ship; and if I could have kept up, their chance of finding me in that waste of waters would have been but small. This was my sole adventure on board ship, and after a pleasant voyage of little less than three months, we dropped anchor, on Sunday evening the 16th of October, off Adelaide.

The next morning we were all up early, and gradually, as the sun rose, was displayed to our longing eyes the beautiful wood-crowned heights at the back of Adelaide. It was a lovely morn, and as each object grew plainer, so our enjoyment increased; the hills presented a most glorious view, and even the very smoke from the distant city seemed pleasant in our eyes. Presently a boat puts off. Is it pulling towards

us or not? Hurrah, it is! No! Yes! till all doubts are ended by the Captain declaring "that fellow to be the Mail Agent." He no sooner puts his foot on board than a hundred questions are asked. What steamer was that? The Cleopatra. When does the mail go? Where is the Great Britain? etc., etc. Our excitement was so great that we hardly knew what we were about, and this was constantly increased by the scraps of news read out loud by some fortunate fellow who had procured from the Mail Agent a copy of an Adelaide paper. Then the Indemnity passed us quite close, with most of her crew in irons. We were all in such haste to get ashore that we made a bargain with the Mail Agent to take us at five shillings each, but this was contrary to the ideas of the Captain, who wished all to stay till the Commissioner came on board. Most of us left the boat; one or two would not be kept; but the obedient ones were not long in suspense, for the Commissioner soon came on board to examine our state of health,

and to hear any complaints that were to be made of the infringement of the emigration act. There were a few squabbles, mainly between the passengers themselves, which the Commissioner very good-naturedly seemed to think should be buried in oblivion; and they very soon were so, for what looked like a mountain of separation when on board ship dwindled down to a mole hill on shore. However, when it was all over, the Captain took us ashore free of all charge, in his own boats. / The port of Adelaide struck us new chums as being a very miserable place, and two or three of us engaged a dray, innocent of springs, upon which we were jolted along the seven miles that divides the port from the city of Adelaide. /

And certainly the first appearance of the Metropolis of South Australia in the year 1853 was anything but cheering; the houses looked to us but miserable two-story wooden buildings, the streets almost deserted, and what population we did see were decidedly of the

order commonly called roughs ; and as we noticed the settlers and bushmen come pelting along in their up-country dress, presenting very much the sort of external appearance that would have induced an innocent London policeman to attempt a capture ; we felt a sort of shrinking into ourselves, and began to question whether we had really done right in leaving our several occupations in quiet, methodical England, where a spot of mud, or a handkerchief tied awry, would have suggested unpleasant suspicions.

We wandered about the town, which looked to us so deserted, and then crossed over to North Adelaide : this was if possible a little more miserable than the Southern part ; we seemed the only people moving about, and in Kermode street we stood watching for a considerable period to see if anybody else would pass that way. After waiting a quarter of an hour, we retraced our steps a little sadly, wondering how business could be done in such a

place, and how we should feel if obliged to set down there to business for the remainder of our lives, trusting that the population that were now in the Victoria Gold Fields would return with their gold, and make the town once more a busy mart of commerce. We turned from such a fate with a creeping feeling of compassion for the few inhabitants who from various causes were so waiting; but for many of us it would have been a wise and happy thing if we had then thrown in our lot with those we were so deeply commiserating, for the population did return in vast numbers from the gold fields, and in consequence of the wise encouragement given to agriculture, many a lucky digger was induced to invest his gold won from the land of Victoria, in the land of South Australia; and whilst the system of cheap land was invitingly held before the returning digger in South Australia, the very opposite plan was carried out in Victoria, where agricultural land was not to be had under the most fabulous

prices, so that men who were anxious to farm were driven away with their gold to the neighbouring colonies. The result was that the gold raised in Victoria, did not remain with those who had delved and sweated for it, but had to be sent away immediately to England, and the surrounding colonies, to purchase food ; and it may be doubted whether from this wiser policy of selling her land at a low price, South Australia did not ultimately gain more from the gold fields than the colony of Victoria itself.

Our sad feelings did not prevent us from returning to South Adelaide, and making a very good dinner at the "Globe" Hotel, after which we wandered about trying to pick up a little news of Melbourne and the gold fields. And the yarns we were told about these places were really something dreadful. Melbourne was represented to us as a perfect pandemonium of vice, and that property and life were not worth an hour's purchase at the gold fields ; in fact from their descriptions, society in Melbourne con-

sisted solely of ruffians and villains, only becoming sober now and then to enable them to plunder and murder the unwary ; and that at the gold fields every man worked with his revolver in hand, and at each noise started up with outstretched pistol ready to fire. Some of us believed these stories, and we were all made very uncomfortable. It seems now strange how any of us could have done anything else but laugh at these absurdities, for a little reflection would have told us that no society could possibly exist under such circumstances. But it seems still more strange that in England, where books, newspapers, and periodicals, are so widely circulated, that similar ideas should still be entertained. However, our informants rather spoilt their tale by always winding up with "Don't go ; if you will take my advice, you will remain where you are ; depend upon it that South Australia is the colony in which you will succeed best." Since then I have seen many colonies, and conversed with their resi-

dents, and strange to say each has equally vaunted the praises of his own particular colony; the New Zealand, Victorian, Western Australian, and Canadian colonist, have all chaunted the same song, and have gone so far as to say that their own particular district in their colony was the one in which a man would succeed best. The simple reason of all this praiseworthy benevolence is self-interest, for population in a colony means prosperity, and just in proportion as it increases, does the land of the early settlers rise in value. This self-evident truth should always be kept in mind when a New Chum is sucking in eagerly the tales of any old resident; indeed, so constantly do they all repeat the same story, that at last with the aid given to it by their self-interest, they almost believe their own yarns; when very broadly practised among themselves it only produces a laugh. I was once engaged with a friend, in trying to find out the best locality in which to place a flour mill in Victoria—now the natural

requisites for a flour mill may be presumed to be corn, or in other words agricultural land where it can be grown—but wherever we inquired in the gold fields, small towns, in bleak districts, stony districts, or elsewhere, the cry was still the same, “Place it close to where I am located.” At last we met a well-known hotel keeper and settler on the Campaspie; both parties were driving, and after mutual salutations we explained our difficulty. After a moment’s pause of apparent cogitation, he answered “Well now, I do know of a place that is not to be beaten by any in the colony, and where such a thing is just what is wanted, which will place the owner on the top of the tree, for he must succeed and make a big fortune there;” and getting down from his conveyance, “I would not tell everybody;” and as we bent forward eagerly to listen, he whispered, “it is just alongside of me, on the Campaspie.”

During our short stay we made but few excursions. The weather was fine; to us it

seemed very warm ; it was the commencement of summer, but the heat, and the lassitude caused by a long voyage, tended to keep me with the rest of the voyagers tolerably quiet. One excursion was made towards Glen Osmond, and certainly the surrounding country was very beautiful ; to me all was new, from the vile road, full of holes, into which the bullock drays sank axle deep, to the encampments of Blacks. The heat soon knocked me up, it was 85° in the shade, and I was content to remain at a little inn, called the Miners' Arms, till the evening ; the others wandered still further, and were regaled at a hut with the good old English drink of mead. Thoroughly English as this may be, they had not previously either tasted or known of its strength ; the result was that when they tried to recover the way, one of them became so drunk that they had to carry him, and the others were so overcome with fatigue, heat, and mead, that they were obliged to spend their first night in the bush, with

nothing but the canopy of heaven above, and a stone under head for their pillow. On the 22nd we weighed anchor, and with diminished numbers, sailed again for our goal Melbourne. Although we had had our fair share of quarrelling on board, yet we all felt sad at the breaking up of our party. There was one lady, a second class passenger, who had become endeared to us all, whose absence was very keenly felt; her husband had been resident for some years in Australia, pushing his fortune; he had succeeded so well that at last he wrote over to his wife to join him. In England she was evidently surrounded by relatives, and when in Dock, many of us were amused both by the multitude of her friends and packages. Her father and mother took farewell of her with a last grasp and kiss, and after doing their utmost to see to her comfort, left her, in the full assurance that a husband's arms would be outstretched to receive her on the other side of the world. From her gentle kindness we all loved her, and owing

to her careful manners she avoided even a word of scandal from our gossip-loving passengers. She was disappointed at her husband not coming on board to meet her, but still she persuaded herself that he was in Adelaide. No, he was not there she found, he had gone up country, then after weeks of suspense, she determined to follow, she reached his residence to find that he had just left, and so for some time she hunted after him, till at last she learnt that an infatuation for another led him to avoid her. And thus, an exile from her home, in a strange land, she learnt the destruction of her life's hope, and in the midst of her grief and shame she laid herself down and died. However, our sorrow at her loss was not then increased by the knowledge of these painful facts, and we went on our way trusting that she was settled in a comfortable home. The next day the wind became so foul that we were obliged to drop anchor off the east point of Kangaroo Island, and a boat that we sent ashore came back with

milk and vegetables, and such exciting accounts of the Robinson Crusoe life led by the two or three inhabitants on the island, that we were all of us most anxious to go and see the real thing for ourselves.

So accordingly, a whole posse of us started with the Captain. We had a small sail up in the boat, and we pleasantly enough coasted along a bold precipitous shore, where the huge masses of dark stone jutted out into the sea, with the angles of their strata differently inclined. We made into a small bay, completely screened from the winds, where we discovered a few stones evidently placed for a landing. I was soon ashore, and gazed around to see if the scene at all realized my old notions of the life I should have liked to have led with a Man Friday, but I must acknowledge that my contemplations were not shared by my fellow-passengers, who seemed more inclined to play at leap-frog than to sit meditating upon the rocks. This did not accord with the inten-

tions of our worthy Dutch Captain, who had come neither to indulge in sentiment or play, but to see if he could not obtain some fresh provisions at a lower rate than they were likely to be bought in Melbourne. So he soon marched us off to a small hut, seen in the distance; outside was a man chopping wood, and we, at the least, expected that he would receive us with a shout of welcome, and shake our hands till our arms ached again; but, no, he quietly went on chopping till we spoke to him, and then, after a cool stare, during which his face expressed "New Chums," he walked before us, without a word of welcome, into his house. We looked considerably crest fallen, but thought the best thing we could do was to follow, so in we went; the interior seemed but comfortless, not a book or a chair, and the floor of beaten earth. My desire to become a second Robinson Crusoe vanished at that moment, and has never returned. We shewed him our tobacco, sugar, oil, tea, etc., etc. He seemed as

if he did not care for them; he, however, offered us some goats, and we went into his stock yard, where he introduced us to his "gin." I have since learnt, by comparing her with other natives, that she was a very fine black woman indeed, and not to be despised; but then, fresh from England, with all my European ideas about me, the very presence of such a creature would have made me miserable. She was tall and fat, black crisping hair, receding forehead, flat nose, prominent cheek bones, and protruding lips, but her tout ensemble gave me a shudder of repugnance. I was the creature of habit, for in reality she was a fine woman, and I foolishly wondered how even the necessity of having a helpmate could reconcile an Englishman to such a companion. The man still seemed in such a bad humour, and to have with it such an unpleasant expression, that we started for another cottage, we saw in the distance. We knocked at the door, and were welcomed with a cheery "come in." The first sight was

an Englishwoman dressing her baby; what a difference, by the contrast, the interior of this cottage presented; there were many of the household chattels, that we thought necessary to life, duly arranged, the pots and pans shone with a brightness that must have been produced by many an hour's hard work; and a shelf of books, almost carried us back to merry England. The whole place seemed to smile upon us with comfort. We eagerly demanded what she wanted; oil seemed to be her great desire, and I am sure that with very little idea of barter, but from a strong wish to obtain what the little Englishwoman wanted, several of us started away at full speed to bring up, from the boat, all our possessions. We had brought but one bottle of oil, which had been left in charge of the sulky man; this we soon got back, and with that, and money, tea, sugar, etc., etc., we purchased turkeys, geese, goat and kid, and last of all we obtained a pair of wouloubies, (which our Dutch Captain meant to

send to the Zoological Museum at Amsterdam. We then presented all the books that we had brought ashore with us; unfortunately they were but few, but they were most gladly received. Her husband was away in the woods. From her we heard of the remaining family that resided upon the Island, and by the aid of her directions, we were enabled to find the hut. The inhabitant was a particularly jolly fellow, and appeared to enjoy his wild life very much. He introduced us to his "gin," who, if possible, was uglier than the first that we had seen; she, however, shared the good temper of her lord, and received us with her most bewitching smile. She was surrounded by a whole heap of piccaninies, and fine, brown, healthy children they were, ignorant of all doctor's care or stuff. We bought of them, pigs, milk, goats, and lots of cabbages, with a big loaf, made by the dusky hands of the worthy dame. We learnt from the man something of the history of the inhabitants. He had

been shipwrecked here fourteen years since, and the first person we spoke to had been a resident for twenty-one years on the Island, or four years before the first settlement made at Port Philip. At first their life was extremely dull, not seeing a strange face for years, and even now they often were nine or ten months without a stranger's visit; but for all that the man assured us he was very happy, the necessities of life he had in abundance, and that he would have no difficulty in providing for his children, for good land in any quantity was to be had without purchase and even without asking; landlord and taxes were unknown, and above all he was *free*. I was most anxious to ask him no end of questions, how he had been shipwrecked? how he obtained his wife? but I remembered, as did my companions, that we were in a land where questions might be awkward; that if he had been a convict, and shipwrecked upon the Island in an attempt to cross from Van Dieman's Land, it was no

business of ours ; and whether he had obtained his wife by fraud or violence, she seemed very happy. But we all came to the conclusion that the sulky, gloomy man, who had been twenty-one years on the Island, must have committed some dreadful crime, which had made all England, in years gone past, ring again with horror, and that he had escaped, by a flaw in the indictment, from the last infliction of the law, had been transported for life, and had then escaped to this lone isle, crossed over to the mainland, and by force and fraud obtained his wife. That was then the opinion of myself and companions, but my after experience has taught me somewhat differently, and I have found that men are far more apt to glower over the wrongs inflicted upon themselves than the cruelties or crimes they themselves may have perpetrated. It is therefore possible that the jolly man may have been steeped in crime and blood, and that the sulky man was a morose individual, nursing the idea of his own wrongs.

For the cheery little Englishwoman we refused to invent any other story than that she was the devoted wife of a convict, had followed him into exile, and had assisted him to escape. We would willingly have stayed some time, and have made an effort to gain the confidence of this little community, but the wind was rising, and our worthy old Captain had evident fear that something must go wrong in his absence, so away we started, with a strange medley of men, pigs, goats, kids, geese, ducks, cabbages, milk, wolloubies, and the big loaf. The wind had so much freshened, that we occasionally shipped a little water, and the walloubies getting loose increased our confusion. They bite to the bone, and a sailor, attempting to catch one, had his hand bitten through, and another received such a bite on the seat of his trousers that he jumped up with the pain; he tumbled against two or three who were attempting to catch them, they fell, another wave gave us a taste of water, the boat heeled

over, and if two or three had not thrown themselves on the other side we should most probably have met with a watery grave.

Somehow or another we were all very glad when we once more found ourselves at home on board ship, besides we were objects of attention to those who had remained behind, and we had to relate all that we had seen, and to describe particularly the manner in which the people lived; and although I do not think that any of us meant to exaggerate, yet we must have dwelt a little more on the favourable side of the picture than on the unfavourable, for whilst all those who had been were only too happy to return, there soon appeared to be a great number on board, who, hearing the account from us, were mad to go and lead the rough life that we attempted to describe to them. The great attraction was land for the taking, and no landlord or tax collector to come round at quarter-day. The excitement ran so high, that I firmly believe, if we

had not weighed anchor, some of the sailors, accompanied by a few passengers, would have taken away a boat that night, and thrown in their lot with the three families on the Island. From this piece of folly they were saved by the firmness of our Captain, who, with a foul wind, had the anchor up, and stood off, striving to beat down the channel. Of course, at tea that evening, the big loaf was brought out. At first it was looked upon with a certain amount of suspicion, but the two or three who first attacked it having pronounced a most favourable opinion of its lightness and purity of taste, the rest of us were induced to join in the attack, and the loaf was soon demolished, and pronounced by the whole party as being one of the lightest and nicest they had ever tasted. I must however exempt one of the party from this approval; he had seen something of the colony and the Blacks before, and whilst we were all eating and enjoying the bread, he praised it loudly enough, but eat not

one morsel ; and now that we were praising its extreme lightness, there was a peculiar smile upon his face, which led us to ask him why he had not partaken of the black woman's bread. To which he replied, that, as far as he knew, he was above having prejudice of any kind, but he did not prefer, as a matter of choice, to eat bread made after her fashion. Had she made it with her feet then instead of her hands? Oh dear no! But the natives had an idea, which he believed to be quite correct, that if the flour was sprinkled with warm water, instead of cold, it made the bread lighter ; and to obtain this result, they took the water into their mouths, and then gently squirted it over the flour, continuing the process whilst kneading it into dough. Upon our angrily asking him why he had not told us this before, the only answer we could obtain was, " Why I was afraid it might have spoilt your enjoyment and relish of the bread." For two days after, we had light baffling winds ; this was very

provoking, for we were all of us looking forward with great anxiety to the moment when we should reach Melbourne, and at once commence making our fortunes ; however, towards the third day the wind freshened in our favour, and we had another opportunity of trying our speed against a large vessel that had been seen in the morning hull down, running the same course as ourselves. A stern chase is proverbially a long one, but we overtook her that night, and passed close alongside.

CHAPTER II.

THE next day we cast anchor in Hobson's Bay, about half a mile from the shore. The first boat that came alongside contained my brother; he had made what he called a good bargain with the boatman, to bring him on board for a pound; it seemed to me a large sum, more particularly as the boatman soon filled up with some of our passengers, at five shillings each. However, I was no such hurry; my fortune might wait, I thought, till the next morning, when I could take my luggage off by the steamer. After all the greetings had been duly exchanged, I began to look at the outward appearance of not only my brother,

but of the various gentlemen that came on board; to me, they all looked like people who instead of making their fortunes must be rather hard up; the dress, consisting of dark cord trowsers, a blue shirt, with a wide-awake, did not seem to denote great wealth; at one time I entertained doubts about their indulging in such a superfluous luxury as an under-shirt, but more minute examination convinced me that although most of them treated waistcoats, collars, and handkerchiefs, as superfluous, yet my suspicions about the shirts were of a very unworthy character. Well, I thought, the company is perhaps rather rough, but for a quick fortune something must be endured. At last my triumph was to come, we descended to my cabin, and with due caution I laid out before my brother various invoices relating to consignments, and little speculations of my own; when our vessel left England, all these goods were, according to the latest advices, selling at an enormous price; I had kept the

invoices most carefully under lock and key, and had not allowed myself the pleasure of hinting to any one either the amount or the character of the goods I was taking out, and the certain fortune that I should make at Melbourne. But this was the moment that I had been anxiously looking forward to; first of all I shewed my brother a small invoice, and he quietly put it down with the words "No go." Well, I thought, it may be too small an amount for him to care about, but I mean to indulge in no such nonsense, small fish are sweet. Then I presented him with a good big invoice, and after two or three minutes' inspection, he returned it, saying "It is well salted." Salted! what could he mean? there had been nothing of the sort in my desk, and I held the paper up horizontally to see if any salt had actually rested upon it. I saw none, and I exclaimed "Salted! what do you mean? there is no salt on this paper." My only answer for two or three minutes was a laugh, but at last I ex-

tracted from him the following information. "People in England think us fools out here, and that we are so anxious to take their goods that we will buy them at any price; and the parties who have consigned to you, have been so impressed with both these feelings, that instead of putting down the proper wholesale price of the goods on these invoices, they have added to the price of every article something like forty per cent, and I have no doubt you have some, where sixty or seventy per cent has been added; now this little practice of you good English people we call dishonest, but nick-name it salted invoice. If all your goods are pickled in like manner, not a Merchant in Melbourne will look at them; they know the English prices out here as well as they do in England, and if they see the slightest trace of salt about an invoice, they will at once refuse it upon principle; besides there would be the loss of time in going over a long doubtful invoice; all these goods, if salted, will have to

be sent to auction, and as the market is glutted with English goods, the result of these dishonest practices by the English shipper, will result in a heavy loss to him." I was uncomfortably shocked, and hunted over the invoices for one of Colt's revolvers, that I knew had been fairly priced, and presented that to him, to see if he would not make a mistake; no, not a bit of it, but fresh disappointment to poor me, for he said "Yes, these seem to be honestly invoiced, but they are unsaleable." "Unsaleable!" I exclaimed, "why you must make a mistake; if I had had them on board ship with me, I could, during the voyage out, have sold them to my fellow-passengers at double their cost price." "Yes, very likely," was the cool reply; "but then you are all jolly new chums, and although revolvers, during the first rush to the gold fields, may have obtained a good price, by the demand for them on the roads and at the gold fields, yet that time has gone by. But perhaps," he added, with a laugh,

“you think that in Melbourne we all go about armed.” I was fain to confess to some slight idea of this sort having taken possession of my mind. This little conversation, at one blow, destroyed my idea of making a sudden fortune, but although this castle in the air had vanished, I soon recommenced building upon a humbler scale. When night came on, a fresh difficulty presented itself; where was my brother to sleep? True there were the empty bunks of some passengers who had gone on shore, but then they were guiltless of beds, and the naked boards did not present any very tempting appearance; my own bed was too narrow to share, and I thought of giving that up, and walking about the deck all night. This little plan of mine was soon discovered, and I was obliged to state the poverty of beds. “Oh, don’t bother yourself about me,” was the answer; “find me a blanket, and I will sleep in one of these empty bunks.” “But,” I said, “they are so hard.” “Pooh, nonsense! I have slept for months on

the ground, and that is rather harder, I guess, and so you will find out before long, old fellow." With this parting salutation, he wrapped himself in a blanket, and was asleep in two minutes. I can truly say that if his sleep that night, on the bare boards, was comfortable, mine, in my bed, was of a very uncomfortable description; heavy invoices, many a yard long, relating to mysterious sums of fabulous amount, seemed to be constantly unrolling themselves only to be covered with salt, that, floating in the air around, rested nowhere but upon these will-o'-the-wisp invoices: then the scene changed; I was lying, desolate and miserable, upon a lone plain, whilst two scoundrels pointed four of my own revolvers at my head, whilst a third thief was shaking the last coins out of my pocket; I made a violent effort to resist the three, and awoke to find myself being well shaken by the Steward's boy, who exclaimed "Lor' sir, how you do fight in your sleep! I have brought in your water, and

thought it best to wake you, 'cause you were fighting so terrible like."

Breakfast was soon swallowed, and then for the grand pack up. There were a great number of little steamers plying about the bay, and one of them coming alongside, I bid farewell to the ship that had been my home for so long a time; all the intense desire to land had departed, and I can truly say that I left the ship with a sigh of regret. It may be that the strangeness of all around made me cling instinctively to something that had been in England, and to which I was accustomed, but I have since learnt that there are few who leave a vessel, where they have been comfortable, without similar feelings. The steamer was small, dirty, and crowded, the fare high, and the passengers apparently of a very rough description.

I went to a small lodging house, where accommodation had been provided; but all was rough and coarse—the people, the viands,

and their manner of supplying the wants of their boarders. The streets were filthy, and the footpaths, unpaved, were ankle deep in mud. Those whom I called upon, pronounced the colony to be overdone, and complaints were the order of the day. If I had but arrived a year, or even six months ago, my fortune would have been made; to this my natural thought was "What an unfortunate dog I am!" and my outspoken question was "Well, I suppose you have done well?" But my surprise was great to find that in almost every instance I was called upon to hear, from their lips, a detail of ups and downs, given without the slightest reserve, or any modesty in relating little personal details and piccadilloes that oftentimes had caused their misfortunes, and which, in England, most men would have striven hard to conceal; but after all their mishaps, I found them sanguine about doing better next time, and not having the slightest doubt but that their blessed luck must soon have a change,

and they universally wound up with "come and shout." At first when I was led outside the house, I thought this shouting must be some peculiar manner of the Australians to let off the exuberance of their spirits, which seemed to me at fever heat; but when outside, being naturally modest, and not seeing anybody indulging in the amusement of shouting, I waited for my worthy friend to commence, but as he, after walking a few paces, did not seem inclined to begin, I asked him "Where shall I shout?" "Oh, in here," he replied, pushing me into a public house, full of people. Oh, thinks I, shouting is some new game, or a new name for an old one, perhaps skittles or quoits, neither of which I could play one scrap, but being in for it, I determined to lose with as good a grace as I could. My cogitations were soon however stopped by receiving a slap on the back from my friend, with the demand "Well, old fellow, what is your weakness?" "Weakness!" I exclaimed, "my dear sir, this

is not exactly the right sort of place to acknowledge those things in, at the same time I am quite ready to confess—" "Oh, come now, none of your nonsense, I meant what will you have to drink?" running over a whole list of strange drinks, the only names I could catch being claret-spider and ale, and not exactly knowing the first named animal, I promptly ordered two glasses of ale. This being the first that I had tasted for nearly four months, it seemed particularly pleasant; the day being warm, and myself thirsty, I ordered them to repeat the dose, and then held out a five-shilling piece for payment, which was taken, and one shilling returned; as the man was moving off without giving me any more, I asked him for the remainder, to which he roughly replied "Come now, none of your nonsense, mate, you ordered four glasses." "Well," I replied, "and gave you five shillings." "Well then," using a tremendous oath, "did not I give you a shilling out?" "Come away," says my friend,

“what an ass you are making of yourself; did

you not know that ale was a shilling a glass?”

“Now then, what about the shouting?” “Oh, what a jolly new chum you are, why don’t you know that drinking with a friend at a public is called, out here, shouting?” In the evening we took some of our drays down to the wharf, for my luggage. Upon my return to the stables with the dray and horses, I handed them over to one of our men, who knew they belonged jointly to myself and brother; I was walking away perfectly contented, when I was shouted after, “I say, mate, do you mean to leave these horses standing harnessed in the yard all night?” I returned, thinking perhaps that in this country the servants took the master’s place, and the master that of the servant; I made, however, such a mess of unharnessing them, that the man, out of sheer good-nature, came to my assistance, but to make me fully alive to the fact that it was not his duty to unharness horses at that time of the night, he cursed me

all the time as an "infernal new chum." This little incident of my want of knowledge in unharnessing horses, and several stories that I heard during the day, forcibly reminded me that education, like every other commodity, is only worth what it will bring either in personal enjoyment, or in good round pounds, shillings, and pence; and that what I had learnt was not of the character, in a new colony, either to produce money or pleasure to me, and that many around me, who could neither read nor write, were better educated for the circumstances in which we all stood than any man who possessed mere book learning. And what is more, they who had felt the half-suppressed sneer at their ignorance, in Europe, were evidently, from what I had seen and heard, determined now to turn the tables, and make the book man, in his turn, feel his own ignorance. Oftentimes have I since seen the intense enjoyment with which men, possessed of nothing but brute strength, and a knowledge of the

commoner handicraft labours, look at the distress of a man of the highest scientific acquirements, but unable to perform the simplest handiwork. On these unfortunates fell the contempt which, in England, falls upon all those who gain their daily bread by the work of their hands alone. Often have I heard men, who have carried off honours at their colleges, say, Oh! if my father had but brought me up to anything useful, either baker, butcher, or stonemason, what a fortune I would make. All this I felt to be very discouraging to a new emigrant, but still there were some points in the position that were not without hope. In the first place, it was evident that the old colonists, and many gave themselves that name who had only been in the colony a few months, hated the new comers, and at every little blunder they made, let off their spleen, by calling them infernal new chums. What struck me as being very odd, was, that a large number of these old chums were very far from being suc-

cessful, whilst the new ones evidently made good progress, and it seemed to me, that after having made a little way, they, in their turn, grew conceited, thought they knew everything about the colony, and forgetting that the country was in a state of transition, considered that what had prospered with them three months ago, had only to be repeated on a larger scale to produce greater profits. In this, I need not say, they were constantly disappointed, and they saw with amazement, that the man who adapted himself at once to the circumstance of the day was generally successful. There was one instance of the success of a new chum that I must relate here. A gentleman landed in the colony a few months before me, with the large sum of one hundred and forty pounds in his pocket; he had also committed the very heinous offence of falling in love, on board ship, with a very charming lady, whose worldly possessions were nil. The first desire of this gentleman was to get mar-

ried, and as with pencil and paper he was always making calculations, I doubt not that he very easily proved to the lady, that they could live cheaper together than apart, and that in fact it would be a clear gain. The next point was to turn his money to the best account, and it appeared to him that the carters were charging enormous rates for the conveyance of emigrants' baggage from the wharves into the city. He looked around, and found that he could purchase a good horse and dray for one hundred and twenty pounds; out came the paper and pencil, calculating horse feed, stabling, and the average earnings of a horse and cart. The result seemed so fabulous, that he doubted even the truth of figures, but they were upon his paper; so purchasing the dray and horse, and employing a fellow passenger who was not so rich as himself, he, with his remaining twenty pounds, paid the necessary fees, and boldly conducted the lady to church. In a fortnight's time, his investment of the horse and dray had

doubled itself. In a few months, he was able not only to carry emigrants' baggage, but to contract with merchants, to convey ships' cargoes from the wharves to their warehouses. Then he became a merchant, made wonderful speculations, and two or three years after this, bought up, in connection with another gentleman, Cobb's line of coaches from Sandhurst to Melbourne, which little purchase was, at one time reported to bring them in a clear profit of five hundred pounds a week. From this period, his speculations were of a very extensive character, and he must have been possessed, at one time, of a very enormous fortune, all made in three or four years. With pencil and paper, he was always making calculations, that always seemed to come right; but one day, either his figures must have deceived him considerably, or the colony changed faster than he calculated, or, what is still more likely, he was not able personally to look after his various undertakings, but be the cause what it may,

he came to grief, for he stopped payment.

The streets of Melbourne, at this time, presented anything but a pleasant aspect, this was more particularly the case as night drew on, for they were but imperfectly lighted with oil lamps, and the public houses did their best to render those who had money unable to take care of it. In passing along the streets at night time, the number of these establishments was very conspicuous; the other shops being closed, there would have been comparative darkness, but these houses were so numerous that you could not go far without perceiving their gay lights, and as the doors swung to and fro, their interior was disclosed filled with men of all classes, in all stages of drunkenness. This being the case, it cannot be wondered at, that in the dimly lighted streets, innumerable robberies took place. English people often taunt Australians with the excesses of those days; the taunt should be rather the other way, and Australians may indignantly ask how it was

that they were polluted by the whole body of the felons of England. The plan was this, men who, from want or vice, had become criminals, were sent out to Van Dieman's Land under sentence of seven, fourteen, and twenty-one years; these criminals generally after a short confinement, and sometimes as soon as they were landed, were liberated under tickets of leave. They almost universally swarmed over to the gold fields, and then, if successful, came down to Melbourne to drink; if unsuccessful, they came to rob. These were the men, the results of English civilization, who committed the robberies and murders so often talked of; they occupied the time of our judges and juries, and filled our prisons; so that instead of the English people having to keep these scoundrels, the burden was thrown upon the Australians. Fancy any comparatively small town, take Plymouth for instance, place a lottery where gold in fabulous quantities may be had, by most of those who purchase tickets;

every week land thousands of emigrants on its quays, from all quarters of the earth, and, at the same time, pour into it all the felony of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and you will have results something worse than even, under similar circumstances, the Australians ever allowed to be enacted on their own shores. The murders and robberies of these men were so numerous, and our prisons so full of English criminals, that the evil was at last insupportable. Ruin, anything was better; the colonies formed a league, resistance was carried as far as constitutional forms would allow, and if the grievance had not been removed, nothing but a large English army would have maintained their allegiance. Fortunately the grievance was removed, but we still feel the effects of the system. In the convictions it is almost impossible to show what proportion of them are old convicts from England; but even in 1859, four out of six executions, that took place in Victoria, were

performed upon men who had been originally transports. If this is a fair average, we may reckon that, at the present day, two thirds of our expenses for prisoners' maintenance, gaols, magistrates, police, etc. is caused by the convict element; added to which is the loss of life and property. But whilst the evil legacy is every day decreasing with us, the evil is increasing in England, where the discharged convict and ticket of leave man form her most dangerous classes, and she is beginning to feel the first bitterness of the curse that she so long bestowed upon her Australian colonies.

Upon my return to the lodging house, I wandered from room to room, seeking mine host. At first it did not strike me as being curious that each room was a sitting room filled with men, who were drinking, and that none of them contained a single bed. At last, tired of wandering to and fro, and asking useless questions, I seated myself on a chair, with the intention of getting what rest I could.

About eleven o'clock, I was awakened from a doze by a tremendous hubbub, caused by mine host, who was clearing out strangers, and moving forms and chairs. He was followed by his better half and a brawny Irish woman, dragging along dingy bundles of clothing, as I thought, but which, upon closer examination, resolved themselves into flock mattresses and dirty blankets. They were arranged on the floor side by side, as close as they could pack, and I was then informed that I had better look smart, as in five minutes my gentle host would take away the candle. I remonstrated against such a littering down, but he only laughed, and asked me where was better to be had, and indeed how could the poor man do better for us, for I found afterwards that he paid sixteen pounds a week for that single story building, and if he had not turned every room to good use during the day, and into bed rooms at night, he would not only have been unable to make his fortune, but would most likely have

found a difficulty in paying his rent. These particulars I did not know at the time, but seeing there was no help, I undressed and slipped in between the blankets; a minute afterwards, the light was extinguished, and I was left to my fate. What it would be, I was not long left to doubt, for I found that I was not for one moment to be allowed to hold quiet possession of my two poor blankets; I had intruded upon a colony, who, if their size was small, their appetite was strong. The number of my enemies so rapidly increased, that it flashed across me, I must make such a dainty booty, with my blood untainted by former attacks, that my lively foes must have sent information of their capture among the different colonies that occupied, I felt certain, each dingy heap of bed clothes, as it lay gathered around the recumbent forms of my companions. They had soon fallen asleep, and as the attacks became fiercer and fiercer, it seemed more and more likely that they slept because I was a

new victim, and that the whole force of the attack was being concentrated upon my unfortunate person ; added to this, the atmosphere of the room became so oppressively hot, that I felt myself being choked. The double misery became at last so overpowering, that I determined upon rising ; but where was I to go. From the little knowledge that I had gained of the streets, I knew them to be too unsafe for a man to perambulate up and down until morning, and every room in the house was, I knew, as fully occupied as the one I wished to leave. Suddenly it occurred to me, that there was a little court yard at the back of the house, if I could only reach that I should at least gain a breath of fresh air. Carefully had I dropped all my clothes by my side, equally carefully did I, one by one, draw them on ; and, leaving the room, quietly moved out towards the door that I hoped was to lead me into the court. Step by step did I plant one foot after the other ; so anxious was I to make no noise,

that I overlooked the circumstance that my foot was pressing upon something soft, till I was reminded, by a violent blow upon my leg, and a most hearty curse, uttered by some unknown individual, that I was not alone in the dark passage. I jumped forward, to avoid a repetition of the blow, and alighting upon something equally soft, I tumbled forward, and came full tilt, head foremost, against the door. I was half stunned, but still I had ringing in my ears a volley of the most tremendous imprecations and curses. I had evidently done some mischief, and a shrewd suspicion awoke within me, that I had first trodden upon one man's nose and then jumped upon another's. It was no time to think; from mere cursing they had begun to act, and I could hear their hands carefully feeling along the wall, towards me. The fastenings of a strange door are always difficult to undo, but my fears lent me quickness, and bolt after bolt was shot back with marvellous rapidity, then,

clutching the handle, I turned it round with frantic eagerness, but, no, the door would not open. One of the men was fast approaching; I felt his hand within an inch of me, when another door was flung open, and mine host appeared, bearing a lighted candle. A curious tableau we must have presented; blood was pouring down the face of one, the other had his hands still outstretched, groping towards me, and they were in the scantiest of night gear. The one who was close upon me had jumped back, startled at finding himself so near to a supposed enemy. Our landlord, however, was not disposed to allow me much time for scenic effects, and he gruffly demanded what all the infernal row was about. The two men quickly explained that whilst they were asleep, I had trodden upon one man's nose and jumped upon another man's head. To the best of my ability, I tried to appease them, by all sorts of assurances that it was a mistake, etc., but I found that men awakened from their

sleep, by either having their noses trodden upon or being kicked on the head, are not easily quieted. From words I every moment expected they would come to blows; but the landlord, who was evidently tired of standing under bare poles, interfered, telling them, that he did not want them to lie in the passage, that they would do so, and that he had told them to sleep with their arms over their faces, that they were not much hurt, and no doubt to-morrow I would shout all round. Shout, yes, I was ready to shout at that moment, from the intense irritation produced by my tiny tormentors. However I agreed to *shout* the next day, in their sense of the term, and, growling, they returned to their lairs. I next informed the landlord that I had nearly been eaten up alive, and the little that would have been left of me would certainly have been choked in the room I had just left, and sleep there I neither could nor would, and that I would prefer leaning against the wall in the

court outside his house to enduring the misery of trying to sleep in the interior. He opened the door, and pointing to a little wood shed, told me I might perhaps find a shake down there, offering, at the same time, to bring me my blankets; these, however, I most positively declined, thankfully accepting his offer of the court yard. I walked to and fro in it, enjoying the luxury of fresh air. Walking up and down a small court yard, after a time, becomes monotonous, at least it was to me, after a day of more stirring excitement, and I began to turn enquiring eyes upon the little wooden shed referred to by mine host. It was a place used for chopping wood, had a roof certainly, but the sides were open. Gradually I became more and more interested in its capabilities of giving me shelter. I fancied that if Jacob used a stone for a pillow, I might make a billet of wood serve the same purpose. I tried hard to think that a log might be made use of for a warm covering, but by no stretch of ima-

gination could I believe in its warming powers. At last I thought that, just as an experiment, I would lay me down, so selecting a nice bit of wood, I made use of it for a prop to my head. Certainly the earth was muddy, but then it was soft, so I coiled my knees up to my mouth, and somehow I was asleep in a moment.

Upon awaking the next morning, I was cold and stiff, neither for some minutes could I recollect where I was, for the noise of the splashing and washing that resounded on every side carried me back to the pleasant days, when aroused by the washing of the decks, I dreamily turned on my side till the steward's boy again awakened me with his cry of "water, sir, water! Breakfast bell soon ring, sir!" The sounds that I now heard were, however, produced from a very different class of persons; the court yard was nearly full of rough men, washing, combing, and smoking; basins there were none, but three pails did duty for the

whole party. I quickly arose, covered with mud and dirt, and feeling rather abashed at disclosing myself even to that throng, in such an unpleasant pickle, managed to escape into the house, in pursuit of something in which I could wash; upon my explaining these wants to mine host, he asked me whether I had not seen the buckets outside, and seemed astonished at my hinting to him that I liked to wash in private, and with the aid of basins and clean towels. There was nothing of the sort to be had in the house, so I was glad to avail myself of the privilege he offered to me, of drawing a little clean water in one of the tubs; and retiring into a corner, I performed my ablutions, drying myself on my handkerchief. Whilst this was going on, the rooms which had been used as sleeping rooms were being made ready for breakfast. It was plentiful as regards quantity, but in quality most rough; it consisted of tea and coffee sweetened with sugar almost black,

hash, stews, and beefsteaks ; served decently, it would have made a nice breakfast, but flopped down before our motley assembly, it was partaken of by those who were used to anything like comfort, without any of the relish that a comfortable meal, however poor it may be, always imparts.

After having carefully arranged my boxes for the up-country journey, I joined my brother, and we proceeded to Bear's auction mart, for the purpose of purchasing a horse, to complete our two teams, that were to start the next day for Bendigo. The yards were very large, and full of purchasers, who closed around the auctioneer, listening to his florid description of the animals he was selling ; his eloquence was in a great measure thrown away, for they seemed more busy in feeling, pinching, and smoothing down the horses, than in attending to him, and certainly some of these animals had a most vicious appearance, and how the various purchasers escaped kicks or bites as they

threaded their way among them I could not tell, for if little attention was paid to the auctioneer, but little did his underlings show for the safety of anybody in the yard. The usual plan seemed to be for a rough rider to mount some brute of a horse, bring him in front of the auctioneer, allow a crowd to gather round, discussing his points, while the auctioneer ran him up to a high price, upon some apocryphal biddings; but if no offer was really made, the auctioneer would say to his rough rider, "Shew him off again, Charley!" and digging his long spurs into the brute, he, without a moment's notice, charged the crowd down the yard and oftentimes into the street, and then back again to the auctioneer. If any unfortunate was toppled over, his discomfiture was received with a shout of laughter by the bystanders, and the indignant question from the rough rider, why the —— he did not get out of the way. We had just completed our purchase, when down came a rain, the like of

which I had never seen before. I was glad enough to find shelter, but the people in the yard tried for a long time to treat it with indifference; at last even the auctioneer's voice was drowned by the noise of the rain on his shingle-roofed sheds, and he retired from the scene. In half an hour it was all over, and I wandered to and fro about the streets, wondering at the varied appearance of the stores, and the people. Side by side with a shop that would have graced Regent Street stood some little wooden shanty, that was perhaps erected in the early days of the colony. The new buildings were all fine, the old small and mean; the very same thing could have been said of the people, the new-comers being smart whilst the old residents were most of them plainly and dingily dressed. Where Collins Street crosses Elizabeth Street, I was arrested by a crowd, but with a Londoner's curiosity I pushed through it, and much to my own astonishment found myself on the banks of a

raging torrent. I was surprised, for if my geography of Melbourne was not utterly wrong I had crossed at the same place only a few hours before; yes, I could not be mistaken, there was the shop of the man I had visited on the other side of the street. In about a quarter of an hour the waters evidently began to fall, and the centre of the road became visible, but to cross was impossible; however, some heavy drays ventured into the stream, and carried those over who were in a hurry, at a shilling apiece. In another quarter of an hour the stream had so far fallen that the usual traffic was resumed. This flooding of Elizabeth Street I found was not at all an uncommon circumstance; Melbourne being built upon small hills, of which Elizabeth Street is the lowest, it forms the reservoir into which most of the other streets pour their waters, and there being no underground drainage, whenever a heavy tropical rain falls, Elizabeth Street

is quickly converted into a foaming torrent. This state of things still continues, for I see that in 1859, when a cab, containing a man and two women, one of them with a baby, attempted to cross this street during one of these freshets, the cab was overturned, and most of the party with much difficulty rescued; but when the poor woman came to look for her baby, that had been washed out of her arms, it was nowhere to be seen; in the confusion it had been overlooked, and was no doubt carried into the river. Everybody who has travelled on the continent will of course fancy that Melbourne, without underground drainage, large and ever increasing population, and in those days without any regular supply of water, must have developed many of those sickening odours that they have been accustomed to in continental towns; but this is not the case; certainly this pleasant result was not then caused by any care on the part of the inhabitants, but simply

by the extreme dryness of the atmosphere; and these heavy rains did much towards clearing out any overplus of filth.

CHAPTER III.

ALL my efforts to sell the salted invoices having failed, it was determined that I should take the opportunity of our drays going to Bendigo, to pay my first visit to this gold-field and see something of the up-country business. Our two teams were supposed to be able, during the present state of the roads, to carry between them three tons of goods; the rate of cartage had lately fallen, in consequence of dry weather, to forty pounds per ton; the journey up took about ten days, the back journey five, the expenses for fodder and men being about twenty pounds. I thought that the profit of £100 was not to be despised; but my ideas were

evidently those of a new chum, and to be ridiculed. After some time spent in cording and arranging, we started for a journey of 110 miles up the country; there were the two drivers, myself, and a lady, perched on the top of the leading conveyance. Tents we never thought of; we certainly had our blankets, and that was thought sufficient both to save our bones from the earth and to protect and cover us from the inclemencies of the weather. For provisions, we took tea, sugar, salt, and bread; for utensils, we had a frying-pan and a billy, the last article being simply a tin pot to boil water. The provisions were shoved into a dirty sack, and the utensils put into the horses' watering pail, and hung suspended behind the last dray; besides this, there was a queer looking grey mare, belonging to one of the men, fastened behind. Glad enough was I to escape from Melbourne, but yet, from the jeers of my companions, I could gather that if Melbourne was not pleasant to me, up-country life would

be worse ; and by every little artifice that they could think of they were determined to make it so ; they seemed to feel that what had been very uncomfortable to them should also be felt so by me. I have several times wondered at this feeling in the human heart, but, except in men of a very generous spirit, they all seem to have it, from the time they, as new boys, were caught hold of and bumped, and then learnt their rights of bumping every other new boy. My experience of the roughness of Australian travelling was soon to commence, the leading driver carelessly striking a stump, the dray was turned completely over, the wheels being uppermost. For a minute, I was petrified ; what had become of the lady who had been seated on the top ? was she now lying underneath crushed and mangled by the ton and a half of goods ? It was of no use to think much, the driver was shouting for assistance. I rushed forward and caught sight of the lady, sitting by the side of the road nursing her arm, which

had been bruised in her fall; fortunately she was somewhat accustomed to Australian life, and as the dray was turning turtle, she cleverly managed to roll over, and get away from the falling mass of goods. It was, however, no time to make formal enquiries after her health, the shaft horse was down, and the leaders, kicking like mad, were struggling to break loose. I took the driver's place, by putting my knee on the horse's head, and his voice and management soon brought the leaders to order. I was so busily engaged in watching him and keeping down my own beast, that I had not observed we were surrounded by men of the roughest of the rough, who at once, with peculiar energy, had thrown themselves into the work before them, till I found their hands about the harness, and in a wonderful little time these good but rough Samaritans had got the horse up, unfastened our goods, set the dray upon its wheels, re-loaded it, and then, without an idea of reward, departed;

bestowing upon us, however, as their last present, a curse upon both our bad driving and ill luck; need I say that this, as a matter of course, was returned with due interest by our men, who evidently looked upon these little compliments as the interchange of the most friendly feelings. The damage done was fortunately but small, a broken saddle and a few straps cut through were all that we had to deplore; we despatched a man back to Town, and in a few hours we were all in order and proceeded upon our journey. So long as the road was level and smooth things went well, but at the first pinch it was evident that our newly purchased horse was a gibber; pull he would not, and whenever he felt that he had any weight behind him, he refused to proceed, hung back, or darted round. Now the driver to this dray was a man who had seen better days, he was of good family, was the nephew of a late Governor of one of the neighbouring colonies, had a share at one time in a first-rate

station, and a fair prospect of rising to the top of the tree ; but a life of wildness and adventure, with a fair share of the vices that young men are prone to, in all lands and ages, had reduced him to his present position. He was a warm-tempered kind-hearted fellow, not one scrap cast down by his misfortunes, and perfectly willing to accept of his position, and make the best of it he could. He was now driving for us, and as the new purchase, called Blossom, showed off more and more of her bad qualities, his temper, it was evident, began to get the master over him ; both the lash and curses loud and deep were bestowed, and there was evidently to be a struggle for the mastery.

A little beyond Flemington the road became heavier, and deeper in sand, and at last the dray stuck in a sandhole, and between two stumps ; nothing but a long and strong pull altogether from the horses could pull it out ; and here, for half an hour, was the battle between horse and man fought out. The shafter

was a most willing horse, but strain as he might, his strength alone was not sufficient to drag the dray out of the hole ; in the mean time, neither the voice of the driver, uttered coaxingly or the contrary, or at the last the lash laid on most unsparingly, had the slightest effect upon the leader, who danced and pranced about without making the least effort to draw ; then the other driver came, and both lashed into him at the same time, the result was to make the brute rise in the air, and with his fore feet to make a desperate kicking lunge at the driver, and then run round the other way to the length of his chain ; again was he brought round, and with the same result ; both of the men seemed to grow almost mad, and to lay on with their whips half frantically ; at last, in his rage, the first driver cast his nearly new hat upon the ground, and jumped dancing upon it, mad with rage and mortification. This was too much for my gravity, and I gave way to a shout of laughter. For a moment he

looked so savagely at me, that I felt uncertain what his next step would be; but catching sight of his tattered hat beneath his feet, he joined in the laughter. Then we made a combined effort, whilst some put their shoulders to the wheel; the leader was again brought round; at the word "Now then!" we heaved at the wheel with all our strength; the shafter strained, the whip was laid on, and just as we felt the dray moving, back came the leader, plunging and kicking, and once more the dray sank back. For another hour, under the burning sun, did we continue the struggle, till, what with heaving at the wheel, yelling at and beating the horse, I was utterly knocked up, and was fain to throw myself upon the ground; for the others, they quietly put down the prop to the dray, then seated themselves, and had what they called a good smoke. After this was over, they unhooked the leader, and replacing him with the horse from the other dray, at the first pull the dray was dragged

out. We pushed along to the Keilor, which was then spanned by a miserable wooden bridge. A man stationed there on purpose, warned us that there was a hole in the middle, and that we must be very careful in crossing. It certainly seemed to us that it would have been wiser to have employed a carpenter to mend the hole, than to station a man on the bridge to inform us of its existence. We proceeded a mile further, where there was a large paddock, wherein, for payment, our horses could feed during the night, without fear of either being stolen or straying. And certainly the paddock was a pleasant camping ground, for it contained the two essentials, good water and good grass. We pitched our camp close to a little stream, and I commenced my knowledge of bushing it. The horses were first unharnessed, then the shafts were raised, and by crossing their prop-sticks a pretty firm support was made; a piece of sacking was stretched across the shafts, upon which the horse-feed

was placed. Then we commenced looking after our own supper ; wood was collected, and a fire soon lighted against one of the trees, water put on to boil, and mutton chops cut from a loin of mutton that had been purchased on the road. When the water boiled, a hooked stick was made fast to the handle, and upon two or three handfuls of tea being thrown in, the pot was immediately taken off ; the great art of making bush tea is in not allowing the water to boil more than two seconds after the tea is in, then some black sugar is added, and if the whole is stirred round with a stick of gum tree, you have a flavour given to it which is not to be found in the best tea rooms of England. Some bushmen, I know, prefer water in which the leaves of the gum tree have been resting for a considerable time, but my own taste never became sufficiently educated to prefer this addition. Then with our tin vessels, or as they are called in Australia, pannikins, we dipped into the billy, and partook of the fragrant effusion ;

each had a mutton chop upon a piece of bread, and so made our supper. After that, the everlasting pipe, and as they stretched themselves on the grass, looking dreamily after their horses, recounting the difficulties of the day, or in listening to some former adventure, they seemed perfectly happy. Around the bush fire men will often, without the slightest reserve, tell the history of their lives, and many a dark tale have I thus listened to, of sin and sorrow. These outpourings came from all sorts of men, and were often, I am convinced, given not so much for the amusement and benefit of the company as for affording relief to their own darkened souls. There were men who were always relating stories of which they made themselves the heroes; but after listening to true narratives, it was not difficult to detect the false, and men who had never given the slightest attention to testimony or evidence seemed intuitively to pick out the false from the real, and to sift the grain from the chaff. The effect

produced upon my own mind by hearing so many life histories, was to increase my distrust of mankind, and paradoxical as it may seem, to increase also my tenderness and love, to look more at both sides of every action, and to try and gain a view of it from the actors point of view, and to pause long before deciding upon any man's motive, and when the conviction was forced upon me that it was wicked, to humbly thank my God that by His grace, and His grace alone, had I been preserved from a similar sin. Every day that I listened to the unrestrained feelings of men, I became convinced that the rich even in England, where so much is done, know but little of the real feelings of the poor. After their tales were ended and their smoke over, which, strange to say, somehow occurred about the same time, preparations were made for sleeping. Over the wheels empty sacks and cloths were fastened, and the end being similarly covered in, behold under the cart an impromptu tent; that the

ground was hard, was by no means an unknown fact, the luxury of the affair consisted in being shut in and under cover, and really the bottom of the dray forming the top of the house, and the sides being closed with sacks against the wind, makes a very comfortable habitation to men who have often lain for months upon the bare ground, without any other roof but the heavens. Superior as it was to lying uncovered, yet it had its disadvantages; it was too low, and the cart having nothing to support it behind, might fall backwarks. Indeed, our men were relating that evening, how two who were sleeping under a similar cover, were killed by their horses coming in the night to steal the corn that had been placed on the top of the dray, for in eating they drew the sacks towards them that contained their feed, and by that means overturned the conveyance backwards upon the unfortunates beneath, whose skulls were both broken. Whilst squeezing into my place under the dray, I observed that our men

had placed the horse-feed upon the top, and upon remonstrating with them, they wanted to know if it were to be left on the ground, as in that case it would be all torn out of the sacks before morning, and either eaten or trampled into the ground. I saw it was no use to grumble, but mentally resolved that one of these days there should be a prop carried behind, the same as there always is on the shafts. There is a certain amount of difficulty in creeping into such close quarters, and then arranging your blankets. I thought myself clever in managing to kick off my boots, and in drawing my blankets warmly around me. I was so tired that I soon fell asleep, but the story of the men who had been killed under similar circumstances to those I was then in floated about my dreams in a most uncomfortable manner; twice did I start up, under the full belief that the dray was falling over, and twice was I knocked down again, by striking my head violently against the axle. At

peep of dawn we roused up, each one taking upon himself some duty; whilst one lit the fire, the other procured water, fried the chops, etc. Then the horses were to be brought in and fed. These things all take up time; for my own part, I seemed the most useless being in the world; my bones ached from the hardness of my couch, and from not having taken off my clothes, felt a weariness that I could not at the time account for, my head was still dizzy from the effects of the two blows I had given it, against the axle, during the night, and worse than all, my Wellington boots, that had been so carefully placed the preceding night, had, by some movement of mine, been turned from under the cover of the dray, and were now, to my intense disgust, soaked through by the heavy dew that had fallen during the night. We were now entering upon the Keilor plains, where I had been told several fine views over the surrounding country were to be had; in this respect I was much disappointed, the

country was certainly open enough, and by reason of the dryness and clearness of the atmosphere the eye could take in a great range of view, yet there was nothing conveyed to the mind to excite the imagination. Nature, in the manifold signification of the word, seemed hardly present, for it is only when the earth unfolds her fruits and flowers, and gives food to countless tribes of birds and animals, that nature impresses itself most vividly upon our senses. Now here there were neither fruit nor flowers, nor birds, nor animals; a few gum trees spread their thin foliage here and there over the land; a want of life, that even if the foliage had been as lovely as it is in England, would still have taken from the view its greatest charm. I have since travelled over much of Victoria, seen nature in all its varied combinations of wood, water, mountain, and vale; and the feelings that I first felt when gazing upon the Keilor plains have always returned, and there seemed some great want; the

distant smoke from a cotter's hearth, the song of the bird, the rustling of animated nature, were all wanting to give to the scene the animation of life. All that day we toiled along ; road there was none, and oftentimes the drays sank up to their axles in the mud, then we had to put our shoulders to the wheel, and heave and push with the horses. Along our track we met with dead horses and bullocks that had fallen under the severe toil. From those that had died within a week there was a fearful stench, but after that time the atmosphere dried them up. We were fortunate in escaping any further accident, but we constantly saw drays and carts, heavily laden, overturned ; when anything of the sort occurred, our men rushed away to their assistance ; they never seemed to tire in performing their kindly offices, and they were so often called into requisition, that I began to have some practical idea of releasing a fallen horse, unloading and reloading, and putting a dray upon its wheels. In the

middle of the day we stopped, unharnessed the horses, gave them a feed, and then, after hobbling them, they were allowed to wander about, seeking what grass they could find. This hobbling is performed by two straps, held together by a chain a foot long; one of the straps is fastened upon each fore leg of the horse, just below the fetlock, the chain hanging between; this prevents the horse moving faster than a slow walk or a hobble, and is meant to keep them from straying far from the place where they are turned out; an old bush horse will however manage, even when hobbled, to stray away a good distance, and I have seen some of them even gallop for a short time in them, faster than a man could run. Although the sun was fearfully hot, a fire was lighted, and we partook of tea and mutton chops. At the end of the two hours the horses were found, and harnessed, and away we once more went. If possible, the road became worse, but before night we made a good camping ground near

the Gap, and last night's proceedings were repeated; the horses were, however, better fed, and carefully hobbled. Being now in the open country, and not very far from Melbourne, there were three things to fear; they might either make the best of their way back to their stables in Melbourne, or be stolen during the night, or so stray away as perhaps not to be caught sight of again for some days; under any of these circumstances our position in looking for them would not be over agreeable, so it was rather an anxious time for the men; they watched the horses till towards nightfall, when they were brought up close to the camp, and when again allowed to go free, their course was carefully noticed. When turning-in time arrived, I resolved to make myself a little more comfortable than I was the preceding night, and for this purpose obtained an empty corn sack, which I placed on the ground underneath the dray, and then undressing, I put my clothes on the sack, and lying down upon them, drew

the two blankets over me. I had observed that some men belonging to another dray had adopted the very safe plan of cutting a good forked piece of wood, with which they had propped up their dray behind, thus making it almost impossible to tumble over backwards. I did the same thing to the one under which we slept, and in consequence enjoyed refreshing slumbers, without either the fear of the dray tumbling on my head, or cracking my skull against the axletree, as on the previous night. In the morning I awoke thoroughly refreshed, and ready to perform my part of the work in preparing breakfast, lighting fire, cooking, etc. But where were the horses? not a trace of them could be seen. The wind had changed during the night, but at what time was unknown; this was an important circumstance, for as horses never face the wind whilst feeding, the hour of the change would have given us some idea of how far the horses had gone in the direction we last saw them, before

they altered their line of feeding. However, nothing was to be done but go in search of them, and thinking that I should be more likely to lose myself than to find the horses, they left me in the camp to cook breakfast.

Whatever little skill I had learnt in cooking mutton chops, and in making bush tea, I now devoted myself to develop to the utmost, and succeeded better than my most sanguine anticipations had led me to expect; the chops, under my care, had received a delicate rich brown colouring, and yet, preserving their gravy, were not overdone, and the tea had not been allowed to boil more than a second on the fire; then looking round, I espied a fallen tree, that would suit well for seats, and another, close at hand, that just came in for a table.

I might have saved myself much trouble, for more than an hour elapsed before any of the men returned; and then as each one came back, he hoped that the others had proved more successful than himself; but when they

had all come in, with their empty bridles over their arms, it was evident that the search had been unsuccessful. They were both hungry and savage; the breakfast that I had prepared so carefully was grumbled and growled over; the tea was too bitter, the mutton chops overdone and full of ashes. To make any excuses would have been absurd, for what could Soyer himself have done, with a billy and frying pan, beside a wood fire in the open air, and the viands to be kept warm an hour after being cooked. When their immediate hunger was satisfied, they had recourse to their pipes for comfort. The great fear was that the horses had been, in colonial terms, shaken, that is, stolen; if so, we might hunt wearily around the country for days without any result; or that they had turned their heads towards their stables in Melbourne; against this last supposition was the fact that the horses had not found any particularly fresh sweet feed at any of our resting places since we left, and there-

fore would not have that inducement to try back. Some marvellous stories were told of how horses would remember, for days after, any patch of land, in which, (having been burnt over,) peculiarly fresh grass had sprung up, and they had returned a week's journey to have one more taste. Neither speculation nor telling stories would bring back the horses, so we divided the country between us; no one seemed to think or care about the chance of my losing myself, their sole anxiety was to recover the truants. For my own part, I did not see much probability of such an event, for the country was tolerably open, and by taking a careful look at the most distant points and the position of the sun, I did not exactly see how I could go very far wrong. I had then no experience of how very easy it is to lose oneself in the bush; once get uncertain of your exact position, and in all probability it is all over, and you are lost. Old bushmen seem to ride away carelessly, without taking the slight-

est heed to the course they are going, and new chums think they can do the same, but they soon discover their mistake. The old bushman makes, naturally and almost intuitively, the observations, that a man, unaccustomed to the bush, must take very slowly, and almost with actual pain force upon his memory, and even then he will do it much worse than he who has had years of experience. When people first go into the bush, they oftentimes forget their want of experience, and think that this peculiar kind of knowledge and memory will come without practice. Whether the learned have to learn of the unlearned, the gentle of the rude, the reversal of the ordinary procedure does not alter the difficulty in the acquisition of knowledge, and what is true of any science, is, in this respect, equally true of the bush, to learn, requires practice and time. In this instance, the sneers and taunts of my companions had made me doubly cautious; and whilst, with a bridle over my arm, I carefully

looked for the horses, I took good account of all the leading points in my progress. For an hour or more did I trudge over range after range, and felt quite sure that the horses were not near me, when suddenly I perceived some on the other side of a little plain, about two miles broad. In number, they were equal to ours, but, alas, at that distance, I was not sufficient of a bushman to distinguish whether they were so or not. The distance did not seem great, and away I went in pursuit; even when close to them, my hopes I felt certain were about to be realized, and that I should lead back in triumph to the camp, the missing horses. When quite near, I saw that some of them were certainly strangers, but for the life of me could not tell, without examining their brands, whether two out of the lot were not mine. To do this, I was carefully making up to them, when I was accosted by a man, who had hitherto been concealed behind a tree, with "I say, mate, just drop it now, will you." Now

considering that I had nothing to drop, except the bridle over my arm, I naturally demanded what he meant. "Well, mate," he replied, "none of your nonsense now, just stand clear, will you; you aint a going to shake my horses this time, I can tell you." "Shake your horses! why you didn't think I wanted to steal them, did you?" "Well, I don't know, it looks uncommon like it, coming creeping up to them like that." "Why I wanted to see if they were mine." "Oh! ah! none of your nonsense now, just as if you need to come up close to horses to see if they were yours; come now, you clear out, or else," producing something that looked very much like a revolver, "why I must just make you." What was to be done, the evidence was decidedly against me, I had crept up to the horses in, what seemed to me, a very scientific, bushman-like manner. At one time, I thought of the stories I had read about Indians throwing themselves on the ground, and then, with snake-like movements,

dragging themselves onward toward their object; if I had done so, the man would have undoubtedly shot me, and any jury of bushmen would have treated the idea of my not knowing my own horses as preposterous. To argue with the man would do no good, he might shoot me, and under the best of circumstances I could only convince him that I was a new chum, and therefore a fool. So I turned my back upon him, and tried to walk off in as dignified a manner as I could; if I had followed my own wishes, I should most certainly have taken to my heels, for I had the very uncomfortable idea in my head, that the fellow might change his mind, and taking a chance shot, hit me in the rear. Mortified I most certainly was, both at my own stupidity and the absurdity of my having been taken for a bushranger. By this time, I hoped that the horses had been found by some others of the party. Under this impression, I turned my face toward the camp; when within half a

mile, carelessly crossing a range, down in the gully I perceived a horse. Could it possibly be one of mine! Notwithstanding my former misadventure, my walk changed into a run, and I was soon at the bottom, when, to my delight, uncertainty was changed into certainty. There was the old grey mare, beyond a doubt, and all the others were feeding around. The mare allowed me easily to approach, and with hands that trembled so much with excitement, that they could hardly do their work, I unbuckled her hobbles, and quite forgetting the bridle over my arm, I threw them, as I had seen our men do, round her neck, and conducted her towards the camp, the rest of the horses following. None of the men had come in, and, much to my own triumph, I proceeded to get out the corn, and to give them their feed. The men shortly afterwards returned, and the question was eagerly asked, who found them? to which I replied that I had done so, that they were in a hollow between

two ranges, and some of the men must have passed quite close to them in the morning.

Our progress was slow and painful; road there was really none, and through the sea of mud that stretched out before us, after descending the Gap hill, I thought it impossible to proceed. The drays sank axle deep, and we were constantly coming to places where the whole force of horses was not sufficient to drag a single dray through; and notwithstanding all the exertions of man and beast, there the dray would stick. We were soon all covered with dirt; at every step, the men sank up to their knees in tenacious mud, and yet they had to scream and dance about the horses, lay on the lash, and then rush to the wheels to give them every aid that was possible. Upon these occasions, I had to take my full share of heaving, lugging and yelling, for it seemed often to depend upon an ounce of strength whether we should keep moving or be stuck altogether. When no efforts could induce the dray to

move, it had to be unloaded, and then drawn out. We had to carry each separate package, sometimes a hundred feet, sinking up to our knees at every step, and re-load. Then the horses were taken out, and harnessed to the dray that had been left behind, and amidst screams, yells and shouts, with every shoulder to the wheels, we dashed at the deep quagmire, to be most likely stuck again, and have to unload this dray, the same as we had done its fellow previously. No one can tell the intensity of this toil, but those who have undergone similar exertions. The first two miles of this fun seemed to knock us all up, and there was a general cry for a smoke; but this was overruled, as it was thought best, now the horses were warm, to keep them at their work. Another quarter of a mile would bring us on to better ground, and after that, we should get on to a main road. By dint of hard work, we managed to get to the camping ground below the Bush Inn. After unharnessing the horses,

the men were too much knocked up to light a fire and cook their dinners, but crept under the drays for a little shelter against the burning sun.

We were now about to enter the Black Forest, and if the name had a sound of ill omen about it, certainly the deeds that had been enacted within its domain savoured strongly of the Father of all Evil. It was here that the Bushrangers eased the returning digger of the wealth he had so laboriously obtained, and not content with depriving him of his hard-earned gains, they would sometimes carry him into the depths of the forest, and tying him to a tree, leave him to his fate. And when it is remembered that many parts of the forest had then never been explored, and even in these days, when a Railway is being made through it, there are many of its recesses still untrod- den but by the desperate men to whom it is a shelter, the terrible destiny of any poor wretch so bound is almost too dreadful to think of.

Robbed and helplessly tied to a tree, suffering for days the uncertainty of death, parched with thirst, the hands and feet bursting with the tightness of the bonds, the poor man must die, and this too, in the hour of his triumph, when having undergone the toils and temptations of the gold fields, he was perhaps returning as a fond husband or father, to make the hearts of his wife and little ones rejoice. Then picture that family, whose hopes have been so raised, watching for days for another letter, and then thinking of how uncertain the post was, waiting a few more days, and then weeks, and at last months, and still uncertain of his fate. When the terrible doubt grows into the conviction that he is dead, with what harrowing interest they must listen to every fearful tragedy that is rumoured to have taken place on the gold fields. And that this is no imaginary picture has been too fearfully proved by the ghastly skeletons that are every now and then brought to light, still upheld against

the tree by the cords that had bound them when living men. These terrible crimes were committed generally by the scoundrels that English civilization had produced, and had then hardened into fiends by the old Van Dieman's Land and Norfolk Island discipline. The audacity of these bushrangers had so increased, that shortly before I entered the colony they had attacked and defeated a regularly organised armed force, that had undertaken to bring gold down to Melbourne; and the Government escort, well guarded by mounted troopers, was hardly considered safe. Just as we entered the forest, the Government escort dashed out, the advance guard with drawn swords, and carbines unslung; they were followed by supports, then the main body with the treasure, and the rear protected by a strong guard. Every military precaution was taken against surprise. I looked with admiration on their picturesque appearance, but my men cursed loud and deeply, as the advanced guard, threatening them with

their drawn swords, made them turn on one side to allow the treasure cart to pass. All the escort consisted of fine men, well mounted, and the dress, not for show, but for use, was all plain, not an ounce of extra weight, and with the exception of the cap, which was white, not a single attracting colour. I had never seen any party of men who looked so well up to any work they might be called upon to perform. There was, though, a fierceness of manner, and a look of suppressed rage, about both the men and officers, that was hardly necessary for the occasion. It was, however, afterwards explained; for on stopping at a little wooden store, just within the precincts of the forest, we heard that half an hour before the escort passed, a trooper had attempted to capture a man, suspected of bushranging, and the fellow turned and shot him dead, and had afterwards escaped the pursuit that had been immediately made. This, no doubt, had aroused the anger of the escort party, whose feelings would have

led them to seek out the murderer of a fellow-trooper, whilst their duty compelled them to move onward with the treasure under their charge. After walking with the drays some little time, and finding my assistance was not very much wanted, I borrowed the grey mare, and rode on in front. At first the road was pretty good, but it gradually became worse and worse, its only claim to a highway was having been cleared of trees, and cut very broad; there all praise must end, for in most parts no attempt had been made at really forming a firm road, the ground having been left in its natural state, and the constant passing of drays over it, during the winter season, had converted many places into regular sloughs of despond. Often loaded drays had to avoid what is called the road, and try to make paths for themselves amongst the trees. It was not, however, so bad as the road we had passed over in the morning, and from what I saw of the progress made by others, I had no doubt but that my

own drays would be able to make their way. So I trotted gaily on, enjoying the new scene, and the exhilarating atmosphere. The road twisted so considerably, that in my increased confidence, produced by heightened spirits, I determined to cut across the forest, and save a bend that I thought must occur in the road. I soon found myself hidden among the trees, and was surprised at seeing a barrack-looking building a little off from the road; this was, although I did not then know it, a station for soldiers, who were charged with keeping the road somewhat free of bushrangers. At the time they were watching my movements, but I rode past with a free conscience; for half an hour or so I continued my route, thinking every moment that it must surely cut the road. The trees seemed much closer, and the complete silence, unbroken by a cry or a hum, so unlike our own English woods, began to startle me; besides, was I going right? Immediately the doubt was felt, I turned round, and began to

retrace my steps. I was surprised at the difficulty of doing this, and saw how very easy it was to be lost; and the barrack-looking building was, when I sighted it, quite a pleasant looking object. During my absence I had evidently been a subject of discussion to the soldiers; and no wonder, for why should a solitary horseman ride away into the forest. When slowly re-passing, to my amazement, I found myself not only an object of great interest, but also of pursuit; several soldiers running hard after me, whilst others were preparing to cut me off, should I try to double. My first feeling was to stick my heels into the mare, and give her the whip, to try and make my escape; for why should they be after me? what harm had I done? But who could tell the peculiarity of the forest laws, which might unwittingly have been broken? I managed to restrain the impulse, and to look first of all upon the situation; and fortunate it was that I did so, for two horses were led quickly out of the stable, already

saddled, and nothing wanting but the bridles, which were being hastily put on ; so that instead of taking to flight, and both giving them a chase, and exciting their angry passions, I turned my horse's head toward the soldiers. This stopped them ; and without pretending to see that anything at all unusual was going on, asked my way back into the road. For answer, I was cross-questioned about who I was, whence I came, and how I happened to be riding backwards and forwards. My answers seemed to satisfy them ; neither do I see, notwithstanding the change that must have taken place in my appearance since leaving Melbourne, how they could possibly think I looked anything like a bushranger. If I had allowed them to pursue me, they would very likely have knocked me off my horse, and then, after keeping me in bonds all night, would have put me on horseback the next morning, tied my feet together under the horse, and then, between two troopers, have conducted me into Melbourne

as a most desperate bushranger, who had stoutly resisted being captured. The magistrate would have remanded the case, and I might have stayed two or three days in prison before I could have communicated with my friends. Then, for redress, I should have been told that it was a very unfortunate mistake, but that in consequence of the murder of their comrade, the troopers were bound to exercise increased vigilance. By not arousing their temper, and getting them to listen to reason, I 'escaped the misfortune of being arrested; but I knew how completely I was in their power. If all had happened to me that I have supposed, it would have been only one out of many similar acts of oppression that the police at that time perpetrated. Much may have been done by them in mistake, incidental to the new and rough state of society, but much must also be put down to the wantonness of power.

CHAPTER IV.

UPON getting back to the road, it was impossible to tell whether the drays had passed me, or were still behind. I knew that they intended to push through the forest that night, so thought my best plan would be to ride on and wait for them. Now, riding is very pleasant, but on a warm afternoon it begets thirst, and seeing a little wooden shanty by the side of the road, where refreshments were sold, I alighted for the purpose of having a glass of sugar-beer. To my great disgust, I found that my purse was left in the care of one of the men, who had made some small purchases on my behalf. I hunted through every pocket,

but not a solitary coin could be found. I was turning away, exceedingly annoyed, when I was shouted at by a man inside; "What is the matter, mate; got no tin? never mind, walk in; what will you have? I am shouting all round." I walked in, certainly not to avail myself of the offer, but to thank him for his kindness. Upon entering, I found that the voice did not come from the bar of the Restaurant, but from a long room behind, that was parted from the front by a calico screen; indeed the whole building was nothing but canvass and calico, stretched across a slight frame-work of wood. The earth formed the floor, and the whole affair must have been of very recent erection, for the grass was still visible on the ground, underneath the tables and the rough seats. I followed the voice, and found that it proceeded from a big rough fellow, who had been watching my movements from a slit he seemed to have made in the calico partition, for his own especial convenience. Hearing

the sound of many voices, and language not generally made use of in polite society, I would now most willingly have withdrawn; but the man still continued to ask me to come in and drink, for he was shouting all round. I entered, and beheld about as rough a lot of fellows as ever my eyes had fallen upon. Stalwart, rough, unshaven, and dirty, they were seated at a long table, smoking, and drinking something far stronger than the house was licensed to sell, in fact I was in the midst of a sly grog shop. To retreat would be dangerous, and to drink with them I most certainly did not much care. "What will you take?" demanded the first man. "Oh, thank you, I have left my money behind." "Ah," he replied, "you are not the first new chum who has done that; but never mind, one of these days you will make lots. What shall it be?" I asked for a glass of sugar-beer. "Oh, that be ——, here, brandies all round." A glass, containing about a quarter of a tumbler of brandy, or in colonial par-

lance, a nobler, was placed before me. Calling for water, I mixed it, and then drank their very good healths: I was thirsty, and drank off my tumbler at a draught. "Bravo!" cried the shouter, "what will you have now?" "Oh, nothing, thank you." "Well, one shout more, and we will let you go. Now then, claret-spiders all round!" And I was then, for the first time, introduced to that very pleasant compound. It ought to be made with ice, lemonade, and claret, in this instance the ice was not to be had, so we did without it. But I found the mixture of claret and lemonade, after a day's ride in a hot sun, particularly pleasant. I now prepared to depart, and the shouter, stretching out his large hand, asked me to give him a grip of my paw, "for I was the true grit, and no mistake." I felt no inclination to resist, for queer-looking as he was, he had shewn me rough kindness. By this time I knew the price of drinks; the brandy was a shilling, and the claret-spider eighteenpence; and I could not

help feeling and showing some signs of gratitude, as I stretched my palm across that of a man who, however rough, was perhaps worthier than myself. Accidentally, in my blundering thanks, I said something about the different sort of reception he had given me to that of the soldiers, who had mistaken me for a bushranger. "You a bushranger?" they shouted; "no, it is impossible that even such jolly new chums as those soldiers are could mistake you for anything of that sort." I assured them it was a fact, and that the shooting of a trooper in the forest, that morning, had perhaps a little excited them. This latter affair was complete news, and they crowded round me to learn all the details. To get away immediately was hopeless; neither was I quite sure of the company, or of which way their sympathies might turn. Besides, who was taking care of the grey mare, at the entrance? for all I knew or could see, one of the brethren might feel inclined, whilst I was drinking, to ride softly

away with her, and seeing that some of them, upon hearing my news, hastily left the tent, I became doubly anxious to get away. This they would not for a moment listen to ; fresh noblers of brandy, and claret-spiders, were brought in, and I was obliged to sit down in their midst, and tell them not only all about my own little adventure with the soldiers, but all I knew about the death of the trooper. At every effort to rise, I was pressed down again, and told it was now so-and-so's shout, and stop I must and should. My anxiety about my horse at last became so great that, come what might, I determined to escape from their kindness. I tried to quietly turn the table over, thinking to escape in the confusion, but it was too securely fixed in the ground. Seeing that nothing but quickness would avail me, I suddenly jumped up, and escaping a clutch that was made at me, managed to reach the door, and turning round, exclaimed "Gentlemen, you are all a set of jolly good fellows, I thank

you." Then hastening to the outside door, my heart leaped into my mouth, for the grey mare was gone. I angrily turned round to the Restaurant keeper, "Who has taken my mare?" "Well," said the fellow, coolly, "I don't think she is shook, although you do deserve it, for not looking after her better; she was there a few minutes since; perhaps she has broken her bridle, and is feeding somewhere about." I ran out, and there she was, sure enough, cropping the short grass.

By dusk I reached the outskirts of the forest. But where were the drays? I could not tell; perhaps they had passed me, and were now comfortably camped, or they might still be struggling in the forest. I had neither money, blankets, nor provisions, not even a lucifer box, to enable me to light a fire. I applied at a small refreshment tent, to know if similar drays had passed. "Yes, lots," was the answer, "but I did not take any particular notice." My position was by no means pleasant, having

missed them, I might have to walk about all night, holding on to my horse; and although I had considered everything very rough, yet bush tea, hot mutton chops, and my blankets, seemed to acquire a new influence, now that I was hungry and tired and seemed to stand a very good chance of losing them altogether. After waiting nearly two hours in this state of uncertainty, I heard cart wheels, and riding forward, was delighted at finding the noise proceeded from my own drays. They had met with more difficulty than they had expected in getting through the forest; they had once been capsized, and were very indignant at my having deserted them, uttered their reproaches in no measured terms, and wanted to know if I had fixed upon a spot for the camp, lit the fire, and got the water already boiling. I gently reminded them that I had no lucifers to light a fire with, and that they had with them both the pail to get the water in, and the billy in which it was to boil. Then a fresh storm of

reproaches. But I was too much delighted at finding them all, to take much heed to what they said, besides they were all knocked up with fatigue; I, however, determined not to stand their nonsense much longer, and at the first good opportunity we would have an explanation.

Camping after dark is decidedly unpleasant; it is difficult to select a spot of ground suitable, and in the darkness everything comes wrong; but at last we managed to unharness and to feed the horses, to get a fire lit, and the water boiled. The mutton chops were cut, and lying on a log, already to be fried, but where was the fryingpan? it could not be found, and great was the commotion; everybody was on the search; in the dark, it was some time before we could persuade ourselves that it was really gone; but so it was. It usually hung suspended behind the dray; it must have been insufficiently secured, and have got loose during some of the rough work the dray had under-

gone. To us hungry men it was a very serious affair, and it was proposed that I, being the least tired, should start out, and attempt to borrow a fryingpan. At the distance of a mile or so, innumerable camp fires had sprung up, and towards the nearest of these I wended my way, full of my purpose of proposing, to whomsoever I should meet, that they should lend me the loan of a fryingpan. The distance must have been much greater than I expected, for I was some time tumbling about in the dark before I drew sufficiently near to the fire to perceive figures moving about, and then they looked so rough and uncouth, that I hardly ventured near; neither should I, perhaps, if one of the men had not heard my approach, and summoned me to come forward into the light. I did so, and certainly the party was not a prepossessing one. There were four men, seated round the fire, drinking and smoking. Trowsers and blue shirts formed their attire, and by each man's side was his bundle of blan-

kets, and they had the word "scoundrel" as legibly painted on each face as it was possible to write. I made my request about the slight loan of a fryingpan, and was told that they did not use such lumber; and looking down, I saw that each man had made for himself a little wooden spit, upon which he was roasting his own chop. "Well," said one of the men, with a suspicious look, "why did you hang back in the dark?" "I wanted to have a look at you." "What do you think of us now?" Knowing from my former experience that a bold answer was the best, I replied, "Handsome I have seen, but never uglier." This they took in good part, and asked me to have a drink of tea, with which I of course complied. They next wanted to know from which fire I had come, and to my own great surprise, I could not tell them; several fires must have been lighted since I started, and they completely puzzled me. But my honour was now concerned in achieving my object, and I made my

way towards what seemed the nearest fire. I was growing desperate, and walked at once boldly up, and made my request in due form. This was a very different party to the one just left, they being engaged in taking up goods to the gold fields, in the same way as myself; they acknowledged to the possession of the desired culinary utensil, but they had only just lit their fire; had been preparing their drays for tents, to sleep under, and in consequence, had not cooked their suppers; would I wait, and have some? And as I refused, some brandy was produced, and I must at least have a nobler with them. But no, I had drank enough, and all I wanted was the loan of their fryingpan. One of them directed me to a fire, where the party had long since camped, and who would doubtless have finished their evening meal. Again I started forth, and this time, I thought, with some chance of success, for the party had evidently had their supper, and were sitting on a stump, over the

fire, enjoying their smoke. My request was willingly acceded to; the head of the party saying that last trip he lost his, and people on the road should assist each other. "But," continued the old fellow, "which is your fire?" By this time I was more puzzled than ever, not having the slightest idea in which direction I should seek for my own party. I therefore told him that having wandered about in the dark for an hour or so, seeking after what he had so kindly lent me, that I had entirely lost the direction of my own camp. Upon this, they pressed me to sit down and have some supper with them; their larder was not far off, and they soon produced some cold mutton chops, which they were about to warm up again for my use; but having a picture before me of my own hungry men, waiting for their supper, I steadfastly refused. Then I must have a drink with them. No, I would rather not; I had drunk enough already. Oh, that was all nonsense; drink I must and should with them, or

else I was not to have the loan of the frying-pan. They would not be refused, so some brandy was poured into some hot bush tea, and I, for the first time, tasted the very comforting compound of bush tea, softened with brandy instead of milk. My new friends would hardly let me go, and their last words shouted after me, into the dark, were "Come back if you can't find your party, and never mind about bringing back the fryingpan to night, but let us have it to-morrow in time for breakfast." Where was my own party? Fires seemed to encircle me. Wandering about, I began to feel the effects of a long day's work, and was becoming thoroughly tired out; two or three falls had already happened to me in the dark; and I would willingly have laid down, with mother earth for my couch, the heavens for my covering, and the blessed fryingpan for my pillow.

From fire to fire I wandered, asking if anyone knew the locality of my own party, but as

there was nothing particular to distinguish them, no one could tell me anything more than that at a certain place two drays were camped, and as this was a very common number to be on the road, it was but a poor direction. At first I was terribly mortified by each party, as I came up, calling out, "I say, mate, what have you got in your hand?" "A frying pan." Naturally enough, they thought it was a curious sort of an implement to be travelling about with, and I was made to come forth and show it, and explain my position. Much as they always laughed, they also, without an exception, pressed me to partake of their fare. So confused did I at last become, that I must have begun to move in a circle, for as I approached a fire, one of the party exclaimed, "dash my buttons, if this is not the chap with the frying pan coming again." In this he was mistaken, for instead of coming nearer, I drew back into the gloom. Then leaning against a gum tree, tried to fix the exact position I was

in, but by no effort could I gain any clear idea of where I was, and what most mortified me, was the fact that I could not even distinguish what fires I had already visited, and the chance of being again addressed, as I came up to a fire, with "why here is the chap with the frying pan come back," was just a little too humbling to my pride. Finding it was now all chance work with me, I went to another that it seemed to me, I had not yet visited. Seeing no group around, I approached, and was proceeding to warm myself, when I caught sight of my own two drays. I had tumbled, at last, upon my own tent. But where were the men? The drays were covered around; I quickly put my head underneath one of them, and found the men sound asleep. I tried to awaken them, with the joyful news that the frying pan had arrived; this I expected would arouse them, but not having the desired effect, I began to bang them up and down against the earth. Heavy as their sleep was from fatigue, they

could not stand this fun, and they were soon sufficiently awake to inform me that they had cooked their own chops over the fire. "Had they cooked me any?" "No." "Had they left me any tea?" "No." "Was there any water in the pail?" "No; didn't think there was." "Had they unrolled my blankets for me?" "No." In fact they had not done a single thing. So tired was I, that I could hardly crawl, but I felt determined to have some supper, if it were only to show the men that I was independent of their help. Where the creek was, I knew pretty well, from having tumbled into it twice during my nocturnal rambles; so carefully keeping my eye on my own fire, I procured some water. Searching for the materials for supper, in the dark, took up much time, and when at last it was all cooked and ready, my hunger was gone, and I eat mechanically, and, as it were, by force. Then my bundle of blankets had to be searched for among the different packages on the dray,

and when I at last found it, I crept underneath with the intention of spreading them out, in ship-shape fashion. The fastenings did not very readily come apart, and pausing for a minute to rest, I must either have fainted or gone off into a dead sleep, for the next morning, upon awaking, I found my hand still on the knot, my head upon the bundle, and my body upon the bare ground. Stiff and sore, it was with some difficulty that I forced myself to rise, I felt changed, the utter disregard, not only to my comfort, but to the absolute necessities of life, had aroused a very hard and unforgiving spirit. We all trudged gloomily along, the roads were fearfully heavy, and as we were all out of humour with each other, nothing went on well. Towards the end of the day, and as we were approaching Carlsruhe, it seemed almost impossible to proceed. Constantly stuck in the black earth, and obliged to unload to allow of the dray being dragged out, our progress was slow and painful.

It was in this locality, that a facetious driver once declared "that he saw a pair of horns sticking out of the mud, and heard a voice from the earth, telling him to be careful, or he would drive over him and a team of bullocks that was struggling underneath in the mud." It seemed probable that something of this sort would take place before our eyes, for we were pulled up by a quagmire. The men went forward to examine, and tried with sticks to probe to the bottom ; it was not to be found, and if they did manage to find what they thought hard ground, and advanced a few steps to see where it led, the treacherous earth gave way beneath their feet, and plunged them up to the waist in soft oozy slime. The place had evidently been crossed, but some recent rains must have converted the former tenacious mud hole into a perfect slough. We were not the only unfortunates that had been stopped by this unexpected difficulty. There were five bullock drays, with their eight or ten bullocks each, and the drivers informed

us that they had been trying for an hour or so to find a passage, and to turn back, after overcoming the difficulties of the country they had just passed through, they neither would nor could. They had yoked twenty of their best bullocks to one dray, and there being ten drivers, each man was to drive his own bullocks. We paused to see the result; after some little delay, the ten yoke were brought in a straight line, one man, with his long whip, being stationed at the shoulder of each near bullock. When all was ready, the leading driver cracked his whip, and at the word of command, the willing brutes slowly drew along the cumbrous heavy-laden dray. After a few paces, the leading bullocks entering the morass, sunk up to their shoulders in the soft spongy earth; they made an effort to turn round, down came the whip with terrific force, and the driver plunged into the quagmire after them, so on with each yoke, the drivers, sinking in above their knees, cursed, yelled and flogged with all their might

and main. The men were from all parts of the earth, and as their excitement rose, they each let fly in his own peculiar dialect; it was a perfect babel of sound. At one time, we thought they would be swallowed up, the head driver sank suddenly up to his middle, and we could see but little more than his head and shoulders; he struggled manfully on, and his voice and whip could still be both seen and heard, as he encouraged and flogged his poor brutes. At last there was little to be seen, but mud, horns, whips, and hats; from this chaos they emerged safe on the other side. Then the bullocks had to be unyoked and brought through it again, for the purpose of dragging over the four remaining drays. To wait for this operation would do us no good; we knew pretty well what was before us. We half unloaded one of the drays, and harnessing on all the horses, and selected what we thought was the best place, and made at it with a rush, the horses trotting till they came upon the bad

ground, got an impetus that carried them for a moment pretty well forward, then came the tustle; we had all rushed into the quagmire after them, and laid on the whip most unmercifully, and in two minutes, to our own astonishment, the horses and dray had reached the other side, whilst we were still left struggling in the tenacious earth. Four times had we to make the passage, three had been already done, and, congratulating ourselves upon our success, we tried to cross for the fourth time, and made our plunge into the morass, when to our intense disgust the dray stuck, and no efforts of ours could enable the horses to draw it out; the cause we could not define, but most likely our three former crossings had cut up the earth to such an extent that the water had poured in, and allowed the dray to sink to a greater depth. In our distress, we were obliged to apply to the bullock drivers, who kindly brought us a yoke of bullocks, and by their aid we were dragged out, and placed

upon something like dry land. Covered from head to foot with mud, we presented a most pitiable appearance, there was not a distinguishing colour left in any portion of our dress, they all looked so queer that, glancing at them, I could not help bursting into a good shout of laughter, and they, looking at the change that had taken place in my own personal appearance, soon joined in a most hearty chorus. We could do no good by standing still, laughing at each other, and as the men declared they knew of an excellent camping ground, we made the best of our way towards it. At night-fall it was reached, and the men, without looking round, unharnessed the horses. To me the place looked bare enough, there was grass and water in plenty, but the trees were few and scanty, all their lower branches had been cut off, and not having an axe with us, but only a tomahawk, we could not cut down any of the trees around us. This all struck me, but I hardly liked to ask questions, thinking that

most likely the men had some ready expedient at hand, of which my want of knowledge would expose my own ignorance and new chumism. When the men began to search for sticks, they found that not one was to be had, and to light a fire was impossible. The weather, which had been very hot during the day, had changed, and in the midst of their efforts to cook, a few drops of rain began to fall; they soon fell so fast that we were only too glad to creep under the dray, and leave our fire and provisions to the tender mercies of the storm that now broke over us. Covered with mud as we were, we huddled closely together, attempting to escape the pitiless rain; dry bread was our sole supper, and we munched away at it, trusting that the storm would soon be over, but in this hope we were mistaken, for it turned out a most tempestuous night. In our anxiety about the fire, we had quite forgotten to cover in the drays, so as to convert them into tents, and the rain beating in underneath them, we thought it best

to get wet through at once, in covering and getting our blankets out, than in shivering underneath from the combined effect of cold and wet. A very few minutes' exposure to the rain that was falling in torrents, sufficed to thoroughly soak us to the skin; certainly the rain did us one kindly office, and that was to wash a portion of the mud from off our clothes. At last we were covered in; and wet, cold, and hungry, we laid down in our soaked muddy clothes. So thoroughly were we all tired out, that we were soon asleep. Waking in the middle of the night, I felt extremely cold, and on touching the blankets found them thoroughly wet through; so seeing that my companion was also awake, we crawled from underneath the dray, and to the best of our ability, wrung them out. Twice during the night had we to do this, and when, after a longer sleep than usual, we awoke towards morning, we discovered that we were lying in a little pool of water; the weight of our bodies on the soft earth

having caused a hollow, into which the rain water had gradually drained, The morning was still gusty and rainy, to make any attempt at cooking we saw would be useless. The horses were soon found; poor things, they looked miserable enough, as they shivered in the morning cold; neither were our spirits particularly elastic. Fortunately the road was not very heavy, and we pushed on till eleven o'clock, when the rain again falling heavily, and fearing that in such wet the horses' shoulders would become galled, we determined to camp. The spot chosen on this occasion was very superior to our camping ground of the previous night; there was not only plenty of grass and water, but also an excellent supply of wood. To light a fire, we now set to work with all our might; and to effect this in the open country, with the rain coming down in torrents, and the wind blowing about in angry gusts, does not, at first sight, appear so easy. The plan is to select a tree with a hollow at the bottom, looking wind-

ward, then by hunting about to find a few leaves, and a few of the thinnest twigs, (that lying under others have been kept dry); the leaves, being placed in the hollow tree, are lighted, small twigs added, and then larger ones, till at last the fire is able to take some few heavy bits of wood; when fairly lighted, it will burn almost anything. This perhaps seems, in description, a very simple task, but under the circumstances mentioned, it is not quite so easy to effect. At first the utmost care is required, and the party has to gather round their few live leaves and twigs, to shelter them from the wind that otherwise would most likely blow them out altogether. We had hardly cooked our dinner, when the rain ceased, and the sun came forth in all his strength and power. Our clothes had already been pretty well washed clean of yesterday's mud by the rain, and what was still left on, we proceeded to wash, scrape, and brush off. Then our blankets were untied, and well soused in the stream,

and by means of a little judicious rubbing and wringing were made tolerably clean. In an hour's time, we had not only made ourselves to look decent and comfortable, but had our clothes and bedding perfectly dry, and no one would have recognized in us the woe begone party of the morning. For two or three days after this, we went on extremely well; the weather was beautiful, and the roads were much better. The ascent of what is emphatically called the Big Hill, eight miles from Bendigo, was our last difficulty. The magnificent road that now cuts through this hill had not then been made, and we had to find our way up its steep sides, between the trees, as we best could; it was a long and laborious operation. From the top of this hill I was told that the view was very magnificent, and that I should think it finer than anything I had previously seen. The country through which we had lately passed was bolder and far more picturesque than the first portion of our

journey, but the toils and sufferings of the road had somewhat deprived the scenery of its charms. So when we turned round, after having ascended to the pinnacle of the hill, nothing had really prepared me for the magnificent bold expanse of country that was spread out before me. Could this be the land over which I had toiled so wearily! The bad roads, mire, and difficult crossings, had all vanished out of sight, and in their place, as far as the eye could reach, there were wooded heights and peaceful valleys. The sun shone brilliantly, and the purity of the atmosphere gave a clearness and a beauty to the view, over a great range of country, but beyond the tranquilizing power that nature, in its vastness, always has over the human mind, there was nothing to touch either the heart or the imagination; the sombre dull foliage gave the scene a heaviness, which the want of life and animation greatly increased, and the longer the gaze was continued, still sadder became the feelings. The

scene was nearly as extensive as that from the lower hills of Malvern; but to compare the view over Hereford, Gloucester, Worcester, and the neighbouring counties, with their cities, mountains, valleys, and ever-changing tints of foliage, with the Australian scene at our feet, would be simply absurd. We stayed a few minutes on the brow of the hill, trying to make out the route we had taken, and on my remarking to one of the men, how different the country looked to us now, to what it did when we had to travel its heavy roads; he answered, "it is ever so in life, we fight and struggle onward to some little eminence, and during the contest, old age surprises us, and when we turn round and gaze over the past, we forget the roughness of the road, and only see the picturesque and beautiful country in which the weary fight was fought." Seeing me look astonished at this little bit of sentiment, the first I had heard in the country, he said, with a deep long drawn sigh, "life is nothing

without the ideal, but let us turn the brow of this hill, and the country, over which we are gazing and moralising, will be shut out from our vision, and we shall descend into the Bendigo Gold Field, where you will meet life in its hard practical reality." There was no further opportunity to converse, for we began to descend; but I could not help casting continual glances at our rough driver, who had fallen back into his former manner, and, as he strode along, seemed regardless of aught else beside the horses under his charge.

The novelty of being close to the Gold Fields gradually diverted my attention. Before leaving England, I had formed, in my own mind, pictures of what I should see; at every opening, I expected to hear the sound of the cradle, and to come upon men as thick as bees, in long-leg boots, armed with revolvers, washing dirt in the creek and collecting the gold. Till we reached Kangaroo Flat, nothing in the shape of gold mining met my anxious gaze; certainly

a few well-like holes had been sunk here and there, and a few canvass stores were standing, but as far as I could see there was nobody either to sell or buy, their glory had departed. Further on the valley widened, till it was two or three miles broad, and the miners' holes were close together; the whole of the soil had evidently been upturned, the trees were cut down, vegetation destroyed, and the soil that had been thrown out of the holes, gave to the whole valley an appearance of little gravelly hillocks. On the ranges or hills were scattered, amid the trees, a few white tents, and every little valley or gully that ran down into the broad valley of the Bendigo, had evidently been dug over, and presented the same gravelly appearance, with tents scattered about its ranges. A few men might be seen, either winding up dirt from their holes, washing it in the cradle, or, with legs dangling down their claims, taking a quiet smoke. Neither excitement nor violence seemed to have any

connexion with their occupation, it was evidently conducted as quietly and as securely as that of the husbandman in England. If it had not been for the bright sun, and clear, exhilarating atmosphere, the scene would, to a stranger, untouched by the gold fever, have been more saddening than exciting. The valley widened more and more, but still presented similar appearances. The stores had considerably increased in number, and by the time we reached Golden Gully, there were some signs of bustle and business. In some places, they actually stood side by side, but they were only made of canvass, with mother earth for the floor. Upon entering one of the most extensive, the stock appeared both large and miscellaneous, but it was stowed away into chests and boxes, made into rough shelves, into these the goods were packed after a manner that would have broken the heart of any respectable London tradesman.

Those that came into the store were mostly

men working in the neighbourhood, and were on familiar terms with the storekeeper. The first customer that entered was a rough-looking fellow, dressed in moleskin trowsers, belt, blue shirt, knee boots, and wide-awake. His trowsers had changed their colour of dirty white into a bright clay-colour, and his shirt had received its fair share of clay splashes, all gained in the honourable occupation of mining and cradling. He produced a round wooden match box, half filled with gold dust. The storekeeper turned it out upon paper, and began to blow at it; then putting it on to a fine sieve, shook it three or four times to make the dust pass through; it was afterwards transferred to the scales, and the value given to the digger, who proceeded to purchase his flour and groceries. From the unfinished style of the parcels, it was evident that the *gentleman* behind the counter was a perfect stranger to store-keeping. For some purpose or another, the digger wanted a few yards of print, and it was

amusing to watch them both fumbling away with the yard measure, trying to double the stuff up, the same as they had seen it done in England. The grocery business, I thought, would never be brought to a conclusion; the last piece of paper was exhausted, three more parcels had to be tied up; how it was to be managed puzzled me, but both customer and seller were full of resources. The first want was felt for the tea; that was quickly disposed of by the digger taking off his shirt, and using that for paper. What was to be done with the sugar? The shopkeeper suggested "pocket-handkerchief." No, he had none; but, undoing the shirt once more, he managed to tie it up with the tea. The last puzzle was ground coffee; after casting about for some time, in vain pursuit of something in which it might be conveyed, it was proposed that the digger should draw off his boot, and carry the coffee home in that. He had just put himself in the attitude to draw the boot off, when his eye fell upon

the print stuff he had bought. Quick as thought he jumped up, and wrapped the stuff around his precious ground Mocha. My men intimated to me, that as it was my first appearance on the gold fields, it was my duty to shout noblers all round; I therefore called for some brandy, but knowing that spirits of all kinds were strictly prohibited on the gold fields, and that the penalty was high, it was with some surprise that I found my order promptly executed. My party was known, and that might have caused the confidence; on the other hand, there were several strangers in the store. There was not, however, the slightest hesitation shown, and our brandy was drank in the face of day, just as if no such law had ever existed. Upon advancing to pay for the brandy, my eye fell upon the dust on the counter, that the store-keeper had blown out of the diggers' gold; there was a good deal, the result, I suppose, of several purchases. Upon looking closely at it, I observed innumerable little grains of gold,

that had been blown out with the dust; there was so much of the precious metal among the heap, that I could not resist calling the attention of the storekeeper to the circumstance. He laughingly assured me that it was worthless, and that I must be a jolly new chum, to take notice of such a mite of gold, it was all bosh; and drawing his sleeve across the counter, he swept the dust, that had been so exciting my attention, to the earth. For some years afterwards this practice was continued by both gold brokers and storekeepers, and it was only when gold became scarcer, and profits smaller, that this dust was saved, and either melted or mixed with quicksilver, for the purpose of extracting these fine particles; and then the parties interested soon learnt how much they had thrown away. The store had been gradually filling with miners, rough and uncouth, their clothes deeply stained with clay, these fellows had a genuine look about them I had never seen before in the sons of toil.

Their bearing was manly, independent, and free. Undergoing great and continual hardships, they had learnt to despise them, to think themselves capable of performing any mortal work to which they set their hands. Strong, healthy, and vigorous, and being the creators of all the enormous wealth that was pouring into the colony, they considered their interest the paramount one, and occasionally looked down with a civil sort of contempt upon all other classes; and when they ultimately found that whilst they had all the hard toil, the profits were carried off by others, that they should then, particularly when the yield of gold began to wane, become somewhat discontented, and think themselves both neglected and ill-used, is not surprising.

Leaving these good folks to make their purchases and sell their gold, we proceeded on our journey. The first thing that struck my attention was a little tent surrounded by police. Upon asking the meaning of this scene, I was

told that it was most likely a sly-grog shop, and that the police were only waiting the owner's conviction, when in addition to the sentence, the culprit would receive a warning to leave the district, and as a gentle hint to make haste, the police would immediately pull his tent down, and destroy his household gods. But then, how does the storekeeper escape, who has just sold us brandy? besides, it must be a monstrous injustice, that beyond the sentence imposed by law, a man should be ordered to leave the district, and have his tent, which is to him his house, destroyed; such injustice cannot be true. To all this I received the following explanation. "In England, people know nothing of Melbourne, and the Melbourne people know nothing of us on the gold fields; but unfortunately, whilst England does not legislate for Melbourne, Melbourne does for us; and though, as you no doubt have learnt, they drink grog down there in Melbourne, to a very considerable extent, yet they have, in their

fatherly wisdom, decided that we shall drink none; therefore none is allowed to be sold. Now, if people in Melbourne, with comfortable houses, good water, and exposed to no hardships, find that the dryness of the climate compels them to drink, how much more necessary must grog be to the diggers, who toil in the hot sun, oftentimes compelled to drink foul water, are continually wet through, and live and sleep under canvass. Of course, such a law, made for us by others, is as vexatious as it is absurd, and is openly broken by most storekeepers selling spirits. As far as possible our magistrate, who is called Bendigo Mac, closes his eyes to what is done; but there are certain low haunts, where grog is sold, and crimes of the most serious nature are both concocted and perpetrated. Our Bendigo Mac comes down upon these places with all the powers conferred upon him by the grog law, and after imposing the fine, he no doubt very arbitrarily stretches the law, in warning them

to leave the district, and in pulling down their houses, or rather, tents." Our conversation was here interrupted by cries of "Police! police!" and in all directions I saw diggers suddenly take to their heels and scamper. Looking round, I beheld a large body of troopers, spread out like a fan, and gradually driving back the flying diggers upon a body of foot police, who were steadily marching along the road; in their midst were several miners, some of them in handcuffs. As this body of men drew near, the commotion and excitement increased; there was a desperate look of exasperation upon men's faces, and they hooted and yelled, shouting Joe! Joe! and every moment I expected a rush and a rescue. The police, supported by the cavalry, marched steadily on, and it was evident that any attempt to rescue the prisoners would not only cause much blood to be shed, but would most likely be useless. The whole country side had by this time taken alarm, men were running as if for their lives, and the

police seemed to cause as much commotion as the entrance of a ferret does into a rabbit warren. All my efforts to gain an explanation from my own party were in vain; their faces had told the same tale of passionate excitement as those around, but to my astonishment their tongues had not given utterance to their anger. Human endurance cannot go beyond certain limits, and that point had been reached in mine. Standing still, I laid hold of the nearest man, and shook him till he became conscious that I was asking him questions. "So you want to know what all the row is about, do you? why it is a digger hunt." "What are they hunting them for?" "For their licenses." The man became too much interested in the chase to give me any further particulars; but, seizing hold of another of our party, I learnt that Government imposed a tax of two pounds a month upon every miner, or any person carrying on any occupation on the gold fields. That this tax was all very well if a man did

well; but if he were unlucky, or came, as many men did, on to the gold fields without any money, it was utterly impossible for them, under such circumstances, to pay. The Government sent out the police every now and then, and all those who were caught without licenses were taken prisoners; and if they had no money to pay the fine and license, they were put into prison for a month, which treatment was supposed to considerably increase either their good luck, or their means of providing cash for the license when they came out. These prisons, in the early days of the gold fields, were of a character to scare any one who had been brought up at all decently. Every assistance that the people could render each other they did, and it was considered the height of enjoyment to bamboozle the police. Of this we had an amusing instance. A trooper was galloping after a man, who was quietly making his way towards the neighbouring ranges; it was a doubtful point whether the man would not

get among the trees before the trooper could arrive; and we watched the result with some little interest. The trooper was apparently gaining upon him, when another man, seemingly frightened at his rapid approach, commenced running. The trooper evidently hesitated which he should pursue after, but seeing that he was almost sure of the last man who had commenced running, he turned after him, shouting to some of his comrades to cut him off from some ground that had been mined, and over which horses could not pass. The chase, by these means, was turned in our direction, and in three or four minutes the poor hunted man was close upon us. His escape was however hopeless; the troopers were close upon his heels, so he stood still; and when the police came up, he wanted to know why they were pursuing after him like that. "Where is your license?" they shouted. "In my pocket." "Then produce it." This, with a very quiet smile, the man proceeded to do, looking into

every pocket; in the very last, his hunt was rewarded with success, and amid the laughter of us all, he held up the required document before the eyes of his discomfitted pursuers. By this time the man they were first in pursuit of, and who no doubt had no license, had escaped, and the police, evidently enraged at the trick played off upon them, in being led away from their first pursuit, angrily demanded of the man, who had the license, why he had commenced running. This fellow was evidently a bit of a wag; he assured them that he knew of no law that prohibited a man running on the gold fields, but if they particularly wished to know his reasons for moving at an accelerated pace, he was happy to inform them that his mates had just come upon an immense lump of gold; that there were no scales in the place sufficiently large to weigh it, and he was running to the Commissioner to borrow his big scales. Under such trying circumstances, and possessed of arms and numbers, the forbearance

of the people was wonderful. This was afterwards explained ; for I learnt that the district was not only blessed by having a police magistrate, who knew how to wield the arbitrary power he exercised for the welfare of the community, but the crown Commissioner, Mr. Panton, whose powers were of a very extensive character, and who had the responsibility of gathering in the license fee, and of generally superintending the affairs of the gold fields, was a very popular man ; it was well known that he detested these digger hunts, and resorted to them as little as possible. Upon asking my men why they had not joined in the yells and shouts at the police, they informed me that under the precise wording of the act, it might be read, that every person carrying goods into the gold fields ought to have a miner's license, and in default we might have been all marched up to the police court, and heavily fined. It was their belief that Panton would not read the act after that manner, and had given orders not to

interfere with those who were simply bringing goods into the place. To this we no doubt owed our escape. In England, the gold fields are often described and spoken of as the most lawless spots on the face of the globe. This, I believe is a popular delusion. The law is more revered on the gold fields than anywhere else. Self-interest makes it so, for it is felt that on the due preservation of order and authority depends the lives and property of the whole population. Great merit was due to the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Panton, and the police magistrate, Mr. M'Lachlan; they were both eminently popular, understood the temper of the people, and carried out obnoxious laws with great tact and forbearance. Under different officials, at Ballarat, these same laws drove the people to open rebellion, and if the main body of the community had not thrown their grievances behind them, and steadily stood up for law and order, the whole colony would have been convulsed with civil war. As

it was, things had nearly come to a serious pass, a rebel flag was upraised and a stockade built. This was stormed by Her Majesty's troops, much blood was shed, many prisoners taken, and an officer killed. So far, the community had helped the Government, but when the prisoners, taken with arms in their hands, were put upon their trial for high treason, no jury could be found to convict these men, who had been goaded on by desperation to a crime that, if proved, would have placed their lives in the hands of Sir Charles Hotham, who was then a most unpopular governor, and who, it was believed, would have carried out with rigour the extreme penalty of the law. The Governor, with great want of tact, would not put them on trial for a riot, or anything short of high treason, so, between the obstinacy of the Governor, and the determination of the juries not to convict the prisoners of the graver offence, they escaped all punishment. Since then the law has been altered, and houses are

duly licensed to sell spirits ; but the effects of bad legislation are not easy to eradicate, for to this day many prefer to drink at sly grog shops, and by thus breaking the law, people become to a certain extent depraved, for the disregard of one law produces a tendency to think less of all others.

The blood shed at Ballarat did not fall to the ground without result. It produced inquiry, and thus led to a complete change of the law. The license fee, with its man-hunting after poor fellows whose only misfortune was perhaps ill luck, was swept away. In its place the miner has to take out what is called a miner's right, which costs a pound a year ; this is not compulsory, but it is held that all those without a miner's right have no permission to mine on Crown land. Their claim (as the piece of ground they mine on is called) may be jumped, (i. e.) taken possession of by any one holding a miner's right. Without this document, in any dispute about mining matters,

they cannot be heard, they having no standing before the court. The result is, that all persons engaged in mining take care to obtain one of these precious papers. Besides this one pound a year, an export duty of half-a-crown an ounce is imposed upon all gold sent out of the country. By these means the successful miners are reached, the unsuccessful left alone, a larger income accrues to the Government, and although heavier taxed, the mining population is more contented.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER mile brought us into Bendigo proper, or, as it is now called, Sandhurst. The business of the town was great, and the profits large, but up to that time I had never seen so miserable looking a place. It was nearly all built of canvass, and however picturesque this material may look at a distance, a closer inspection soon dispels the illusion. This is particularly the case when there is much of it, and nothing in the shape of trees to make a contrast, the squalor produced by many persons living close together without any of the conveniences of life is then easily seen, for the wind and weather soon reduce some portion of this

thin material to tatters. The stores were close together, some of them very large, containing many thousand pounds worth of property. A very small portion of these erections were built partly of slabs. These slabs are planks of wood split out of the gum trees, they are generally from six to nine feet long, and about eight inches broad; from the way in which they are made they are very rough both on their sides and edges. The method of building with them is to stand them on end, nailing each one at the top to a framework previously prepared; this makes a very strong building, and in this way most of the stables and rough outhouses up the country are prepared. For stores and buildings intended for human habitations, these slabs present some disadvantages; from their edges not meeting at all parts, there are, even when the building is first erected, innumerable places where the air freely enters, and as the hot sun dries the slabs more completely, these openings become so enlarged that between each

there is a space of about an inch. For the purpose of due ventilation it may be convenient to have, at every eight inches, an opening right up the wall in which the fingers can be inserted, but, from my own personal experience, I can testify that such a building is draughty, and that it is very difficult to keep a candle alight. There is a superior method of making use of these slabs, but as it takes much longer it is very seldom adopted. The plan is to cut them into short lengths, square their sides, and then to drop them sideways into a previously prepared grooved framework ; their sides then meet close together, and when the sun shrinks them their own weight presses them together, and the loss of bulk has to be made up by adding another short slab at the top. In the town two main thoroughfares, with smaller streets crossing them, had been formed. The roadway was full of holes, and stumps and trees were standing in their midst ; pathway there was none, and each owner of a store made whatever

path fancy might dictate in front of his own occupation; most of them did nothing, and allowed the road to come right up to their store. The whole place put me in mind, without the shows, clowns, and fun, of Bartholomew fair very considerably out at elbows. In front of the town stands Camp Hill, and on this is erected the Government buildings; they were then mostly built of canvass; the post office consisted of two tents. The quarters of the officials were mainly built of the same material, even justice was dispensed under its shade. The prisoners were confined in huts, formed of trees laid one upon another and bound together with iron; there was also a stockade in which they were allowed to take the air. The only public building in the town was the hospital. When the stone chimney to this had to be built, the contractor advertised in the usual manner, by sticking up placards stating his wants, on the neighbouring trees, and in the stores. Eventually a man applied to him

for the work. The contractor had been a builder in Adelaide, and was therefore aware that men in the colonies often offered to perform work of which they had no previous knowledge, he therefore put the individual applying to a cross examination, asking him whether he had been accustomed to such work, etc. From the answers, he gathered that the applicant had been brought up to the business. No further demur could be made, and the work was given into his hands. Whilst the chimney was in progress, the builder had constant opportunity of superintending and seeing that the work was done aright. At its completion, in addition to the payment, he could not refrain from complimenting the workman upon the manner his work had been done. All such compliments are agreeable, and in this instance they were received with a particularly pleasant smile. And, repeating the compliments, the man said "You think the chimney is well built, so do I; but when I commenced the work, it

was the first time I had ever taken a trowel into my hand." It must be almost needless to add that such cleverness, in a new colony, could not fail to rise; and mount it very soon did. The *gentleman* entered into business, and his progress was so rapid, and his manners so popular, that five or six years afterwards he was elected a member of the Sandhurst municipal council, and in the following year was elected mayor, and, I believe, in that position was present at laying the foundation of a fine new stone hospital that was to take the place of the old one, on which he had worked as little more than a day-labourer.

Our own place of business was at the seventh White hill, some four miles or so from the town; to this we at once proceeded. There was no place of security for our horses, and in the evening we had to bring them inside the end division of our store; even there it was considered they were hardly safe from being shaken. However, the next morning I had the pleasure

of seeing them depart en route for Melbourne, to bring up another lot of goods. Living on the gold fields was not then very different to what it was on the road. Fires were usually lighted outside the stores, at which the meals were cooked in camp ovens. Bread could be had at enormous prices, but vegetables were almost beyond any one's means, except as a treat; cabbages at half-a-crown each, and potatoes at eighteenpence a pound; eggs at eighteen shillings a dozen, and so on with almost all farm produce. Milk was not to be bought at any price. The profits on all sorts of business were very large; ours might have been very considerably increased if we would have sold spirits, but against this we had, from our first establishment, resolutely set our faces, and nothing would induce us to break the rule. Business did not require any very nice calculations, the plan was usually to double and treble the Melbourne price, and besides that, to add on the cost of cartage; on bulky articles, this

last charge was often the principal expense. Nor need this be wondered at, when it is remembered that during the winter the carriage of one ton of goods had risen to one hundred and twenty, or a hundred and forty pounds. When the summer came on, cartage rapidly fell, and with it the value of all goods upon the gold fields. This constituted the great uncertainty of up-country store-keeping. In our own experience it has happened that goods have been dispatched from Melbourne, at one hundred and twenty pounds a ton cartage, have been delayed by the vileness of the road for six weeks, by which time cartage had fallen to thirty pounds a ton; and the goods, upon arrival have not realized the ninety pounds difference between the price of the cartage when they left Melbourne, and when they arrived in Bendigo. From this cause, and the immense expense of living, profits that seemed large, turned out, upon the balance sheet, to be but small. There was not an acre of agricultural

land sold in the neighbourhood; the Governor Latrobe apparently having set his face against the land being used to feed the people, or for any other purpose than for grazing sheep and cattle. The result was palpable; the Squatters, who were near unto ruin before the discovery of the gold fields, found that it caused such an extraordinary increase in the population, that the price of their beef and mutton went up in a wonderful manner, and before they could well look round them, their fortunes, by no work of theirs, were suddenly made; and the gold which would have supported a large agricultural population was all sent out of the country to buy the necessaries of life. Upon the mining community this state of things fell with peculiar hardship; at Melbourne the price of provisions brought from beyond the sea was fearfully high, but these high prices were greatly increased to the diggers by the enormous cost of land transport from Melbourne to themselves. All this time there was land in abundance around the

gold fields, and there were stout arms and willing hands ready to hold the plough and cultivate the ground. Government would neither sell nor let, nor allow the land to be tilled, and the digger discovered that the gold he had so hardly torn from the soil was exchanged away in the enormous prices given for his daily food, which he also saw could be raised for him, at moderate prices, in his own neighbourhood. At all turns he found the result of his labours eaten away by the suicidal policy on the part of the La-trobe government. If the miner wished in some portion of his work to employ animal labour, he discovered the expense to be almost insupportable. Hay a hundred pounds a ton, and oats thirty-five shillings a bushel, made the keep of a horse too heavy for ordinary use. The merchants and traders of Melbourne enjoyed the advantage of having the whole trade of the country; all that was wanted to feed and clothe the people, passing through their hands; and it was perhaps some compensating

advantage for high prices. But the up-country traders had none of this, they felt that gold did not grow, that a time must come when it would be exhausted, and if other occupations did not spring up in their district, it would be folly to build homes, or take the slightest trouble in collecting together furniture, or any of the innumerable comforts that Englishmen, from long usage, have learnt to consider almost the essential decencies of life. It was this state of things that produced the squalor and discomfort that I first noticed at Bendigo. Every one I met seemed to consider the place as done; the produce of gold was falling off, the people were leaving rapidly, and in a short time the fame of Bendigo would be as a tale that was told. To do more than erect a tent, or build a canvass store, under such circumstances, would have been the very height of folly. If the policy of the Latrobe government had been long continued, the gold districts must have been ruined, but fortunately all

classes, except the squatters, awoke to the fact that if all the gold continued to leave the country for farm produce, which could be grown cheaper at home, their present prosperity was a bubble that might burst at any moment. The cry was raised, "Unlock the lands to the people." This was repeated so fiercely, that some modification of the system became imperative. Small portions of land were surveyed and offered by Government at auction. In my own district the competition was so great that ten and even twenty pounds an acre was given for agricultural land, this too in a new country, where there were millions of acres unused, because unsold. The Governor Latrobe left, and was succeeded by Sir Charles Hotham, under whose administration the lands were still further unlocked. In 1860, the land was thrown open to the people under a more popular and generous plan. The main feature of the system being, free selection at one pound an acre, one half only of the allotment being paid for at

the time of purchase, the rest being leased from Government until such time as the holder can pay the balance of his purchase money. Those who select under this law being restricted to 640 acres in one year.

Finding trade grow slack at the White Hills, we removed our store into the town of Bendigo. In our new building, we were the first introducers of doors and windows. Becoming accustomed to the life, I found it bearable, but by no means pleasant. In the ensuing January, I had an attack of colonial fever; mine was but a slight case, but the thirst was intolerable. The fly over our store had been partly blown away, and the sun penetrating the canvass covering, seemed to strike into my head. My doctor, being a warm kind-hearted friend, did his best for me, and in four days, after making several efforts, I managed, although my head swam round like a top, to stand upon my legs without falling. My determination was to go down to Melbourne, our drays had come up,

and go I would ; crawling round to Dr. Smith, I informed him of my resolution. At first he tried to laugh me out of so mad a resolve, but seeing that nothing would induce me to change, he poured me out half a tumbler of port wine, saying that was the only medicine that could support me. My thirst was still very great, and I drank it off eagerly enough. The doctor was called away, very foolishly leaving the decanter in my custody. I could not resist the temptation, and poured myself out a full tumbler of the generous wine. Just as it was finished, Dr. Smith returned ; looking at the decanter and then at me, he said "are you mad?" "Mad," I answered, "certainly not, drunk perhaps, but mad, oh, dear me, no." The wine had given me strength, and to my own astonishment, I walked straight, and managed to get into the cart without assistance. The first day's journey in the dray that was innocent of springs, and over rough roads, was most trying ; neither was my couch

on the earth, at night, likely to do me much good, in fact, at first sight, it would appear the very thing that would bring me soonest to occupy a portion of the bosom of mother earth for ever. Strange to say, it was not so; on awaking, after my first night of camping out, I felt myself surprisingly better, and so fast did the improvement continue, that long before we reached Melbourne, my health was completely restored. Such a course of proceeding in England would doubtless be madness, but in Australia the climate is so very different. Much has been said against the climate of Australia, and allusion has particularly been made to the great mortality among children. Diarrhoea, merging into dysentery, no doubt carries off a great number of infants; but, on the other hand, they are not so liable to many other complaints: small-pox, for instance, is practically unknown. A large number of successful people in Victoria had been brought up in poverty; meat in their early life must

have been a stranger seldom seen at their table, and all concentrated and exciting foods, with spiritous drinks, were of necessity looked for but as occasional treats. When in Australia, the very reverse of this was the case; meat was the cheap article, eaten in large quantities three times a day; taking spiritous drinks was the daily practice, and too often indulged in up to the verge of intoxication; vegetables, milk, and farinaceous food, were the expensive articles, and rarely partaken of. Owing to this sudden change in the diet of the parents, it may be easily supposed that the seeds of dysentery were born with the child; and as the same system was afterwards continued, can it be wondered at that innumerable children fell victims to the disease, or, as it was improperly called, the climate? A little knowledge of natural laws would have prevented this wholesale murder of the innocents. Farm produce has now, with the sale and cultivation of the land, become much cheaper, and a change

for the better will no doubt take place in the habits of the people. For persons in a decided state of consumption, I consider Victoria to be a bad place; it may do very well for those whose lungs are delicate, but when disease has gone beyond the first stage, the rapid changes of temperature during the summer months are generally found too great. This question has often been asked me, and I have invariably desired the questioner to inform his physician that in Victoria the change of temperature in a few hours often amounts to thirty and forty degrees. In the *winter* month of July, 1855, the lowest marked by the thermometer was $29^{\circ} 7''$, the highest 60° , adopted mean $48^{\circ} 3''$. In the *summer* month of January, 1856, the lowest marked was 49° , the highest 98° , adopted mean $67^{\circ} 9''$. And these years were below the average in marking the extreme points of heat and cold. Consumptive patients in Victoria are generally advised by the faculty to remove to Moreton Bay, or, as it is now called, Queensland,

where the variations of temperature are less.

During the journey I was then making, the weather was beautiful; not a drop of rain had fallen for two months, and we occasionally had some difficulty in procuring water for the horses. At one place a peculiar incident happened, supplying us in the bush with a most *recherché* dessert. We had purchased from a man some water, that he had preserved in a tank, it was so putrid that although the horses had not partaken of any during the day, they refused to drink. We hoped by boiling and putting in a large quantity of tea, to hide some portion of its disagreeable taste and smell. In this we were disappointed, the tea, made with this water, had to be swallowed on account of our great thirst, but we were obliged, whilst drinking, to hold our noses, so that the smell should not turn us sick. By some means we were out of meat, and dry bread was not easily washed down by the filthy beverage. We were all grumbling over our miserable

fare, and asking what could possibly reconcile one to such misery; one hundred a year in England was better than a fortune in Australia, etc. Our growlings were disturbed by a loud noise, and, on looking up, we saw a dray being furiously galloped away with by two frantic horses, who had evidently escaped the control of their driver, and were now dashing through the trees and over stumps. They made rapidly towards us, and capsized the dray at our very feet; the goods coming over with a tremendous crash. We did not for the moment strive to understand the reason of a peculiar glass jingle among the goods, but threw ourselves upon the horses, unharnessing, etc. By the time the owner arrived, the dray was put right, and the horses restored to their feet. The goods were scattered all about; some of the packages, from the violence of their fall, had burst asunder. Our noses informed us that the atmosphere was redolent of different descriptions of spirits. Upon seeking an explanation, we found the

driver lamenting and moaning over various cases, from whence were pouring different liquids, of whose spiritual character our noses had given us previous information. It appeared that this poor man was taking up to the Gold Fields, a full load of the most exquisite foreign fruits, preserved in spirits, that some enterprising Parisian merchant had sent to Victoria. A large number of the bottles were either cracked or broken. To allow the fragrant spirit to lose its sweetness upon the barren earth, or to refuse the fruit which would so soon, without the spirit, become worthless, would have been folly. We were quickly seated round a repast of luscious fruits, that even the most fastidious of epicures would have envied. We were taking down to Melbourne some people who thought it was all over with the Gold Fields, and who meant to emigrate to another colony; these people indulged so freely with the French liqueurs, that when we wanted to proceed on our journey, we had great difficulty

in getting them to move on, and afterwards in restraining their boisterous merriment. Before we reached Melbourne, our driver was taken seriously ill with colonial fever, so that he could hardly move. Another of the party had been bitten under both eyes, during his sleep, by a little fly, and in the course of a few hours, a swelling rose up as large as a pigeon's egg, completely obscuring his vision. This is by no means an unusual occurrence when sleeping in the open air in the bush, the fly, which is very small and black, seeming to have an attachment to some persons, whilst he totally avoids others. Still weak from fever, the care of the party, and the whole management and driving of the horses devolved upon myself. It was therefore with no little satisfaction that on the sixth day after leaving Bendigo, we entered Melbourne, and I was able to deposit the sick man on a comfortable bed, and obtain for him medical assistance. Since my former visit to Melbourne, only a few months had elapsed,

but there was evidently a great change going on both in the people and the town. New buildings had sprung up as if by magic, the people were better dressed, there was less drunkenness seen in the streets, and at night-time more order was kept.

All the exertions of our firm had been unable to get rid of any considerable portion of the goods that had been consigned through me to our house. Amongst commercial men, a jubilant manner had given place to the most gloomy anticipations. It was not difficult to learn the cause of this change. People in England had suddenly woke up, and gone mad about Victoria; not remembering that the whole population of the colony had not reached four hundred thousand souls, they thought the consuming powers of the place were without limit. If the people were rich, they could not eat beyond a certain quantity; neither did they, in a warm climate, feel inclined to wear three or four suits of clothes

at one time, for the mere convenience of the manufacturing industry of the mother country. If England had been the only nation we had to contend with, it would have been bad enough, but all the people of the world were pouring in supplies. To sell at anything like a reasonable price was hopeless, the warehouses were all over-stocked, and could not be built fast enough to cover the goods. Ours, by great good fortune, had been warehoused some little time before, at what we thought enormous rates. Upon expostulating about the heaviness of this charge, which in a year's time would eat up the value of the less costly and bulky articles, I was advised to try my own powers of persuasion upon the warehouseman. The only result of my exertions was the assurance that my firm had made an uncommon good bargain, and when the time was up they had agreed for, the charge would be just double. The only commercial people who seemed satisfied were the auctioneers. Their business had

immensely increased ; they were building auction marts in a style of magnificence I had never seen equalled. Ship-loads of goods were poured into them, and disposed of in a few hours, at any sacrifice, to make room for fresh importations. To get the large auctioneers to sell small lots was a favor, and was generally only obtained by great exertion. Seen from the auctioneer's point of view, the colony was progressing most favourably ; the commercial classes knew very differently, they supported themselves by the belief that these excessive shipments must soon cease, for they had sent home accounts of the glutted state of the market. The English shippers thought they knew more of the colony than its inhabitants, and in spite of warnings, continued their excessive supplies. To those in the colony who had bought largely, or who shipped on their own account, this state of things was ruin ; to the English shipper it must have been an immense loss, for I have seen their goods sold at the

auction marts for freight, carriage, and commission, indeed in some cases, besides the total loss, there was a heavy bill for expenses, which the goods sold had not liquidated. The class that made the immediate gain out of this state of affairs was the work-people, who, earning very large wages, were able to buy many things cheaper than they could be manufactured in England.

Some of my fellow-passengers had comfortably settled themselves in Melbourne. There was one gentleman, an architect, who had come out as a second class passenger, and whose worldly possessions, upon landing, had a close approximation to *nil*, had so used the few months which had elapsed since his arrival in the colony, that I found him established in a comfortable wooden house in St. Kilda, and paying a rent of five guineas a week. With great kindness he pressed me to take up my abode at his house, showing me a nice little room, with a French bedstead, etc., that I should have all to myself. It was a great

temptation, for I had not seen such comfortable luxury for many a long day, but for several reasons I wished to return to Melbourne, and among others, there was the sick man, and having told the landlord I should return, he had promised to preserve a room for me. The offer of my friend was refused, and after a trudge of three or four miles my home was reached. After seeing my sick friend, the landlord showed me to my room. Upon opening the door, to my great disgust, the same scene that greeted me on my first landing was spread out before me. The room was full of recumbent forms, they were closer together than I had seen them on a former occasion, no man could turn over without disturbing his neighbour. Side by side, and foot to foot, were they packed. My first thought was that the landlord had intentionally deceived me, but the blank look of amazement that overspread his face, when he became convinced that my expectation was to have a room to myself, soon

proved my error. He indignantly asked how was it to be expected that, after having given up a whole room to a man brought into his house sick with fever, he could give up another for my sole advantage. Not being able to answer the question, and seeing that every inch on the floor was already occupied, the question occurred, "where am I to sleep?" Seeing me anxiously scan the floor for perchance a spare spot, the landlord assured me that it was not on the ground I was to sleep, he had preserved a most "*illigant*" place for me. The table had been kept for my express use, and it was the finest situation in the room. Its hardness was nothing to me, but after sleeping in the open air so much, I thought that so many persons breathing in the same small room would choke me in my elevated bed. Finding there was a general reluctance to having the window open during the night, I turned my back on the *illigant* situation on the table, and trudged back to St. Kilda, which reaching at one o'clock in

the morning, I made known my position, and, amidst great laughter, entered the snug little chamber that a few hours before had been so ungraciously refused. Life at St. Kilda was a different one to that on the Gold Fields; balls, parties, and picnics, followed each other in rapid succession, and a more hospitable collection of people it had never been my good fortune to meet. It was a complete change of existence; money seemed plentiful, and every description of elegant and comfortable luxury was freely enjoyed. The necessities of my position did not allow me to indulge too long in these sweets. My horses were literally eating their heads off in Melbourne, the charge being fifteen shillings a day for each. The store up the country required fresh goods, and finding that the sick driver was suffering from a very severe attack of colonial fever, that would most likely confine him for weeks to his bed, I made up my mind to drive the horses myself. A young doctor offered to go with me, and putting off

the gay clothes in which I had been figuring at St. Kilda, and donning the old duds that had previously seen good up-country service, we departed one fine afternoon with a heavy cargo for Sandhurst. Loading up had occupied us all the morning, and our departure was made rather late. It had been our intention to make for the Keilor paddock, but darkness surprised us on the road; we were also treated to a thunder storm, and with the rain pouring heavily upon us, we struggled on, every minute expecting to reach the Keilor. The darkness had completely shut us in, and where we were began to be a matter of uncertainty. To our surprise we at last came upon an hotel, and discovered we had mistaken our route, having got on the Jackson's Creek road. The Lady of the Lake Hotel fortunately boasted of a paddock, in which we gladly put the horses, and after feeding them, we escaped from the rain into the house. Upon making enquiries, we were informed that the road we were on was

really the shortest, but in consequence of two or three steep bits it was generally avoided, and that it came into the main road just previous to entering the Black Forest. At our first halting place we discovered that all our culinary utensils had been left behind; knives, pannikins, frying pan, billy, were *non est*. This was a grievous misfortune, at the very commencement of our journey. However, after making a great hunt, I found an old billy at the bottom of the dray, certainly it was cracked, so that it let the water out nearly as fast as it was poured in, but by dabbing it about with clay, it was eventually made pretty water tight, and we also had our pocket knives. With these we managed to cook and eat our meals during the whole of this journey. Once or twice, I had to walk a mile or so for water, and found that carrying it such a distance would wash the clay away from the cracks, and allow the precious liquid to escape before it could be turned into tea. At Gisborne we were

enabled to purchase two pannikins; if it had not been for their aid, we should once or twice have had to take our meals without anything to drink. Water we found very scarce, and on two occasions we had to follow the footsteps of the horses on marshy ground, and out of each footprint scoop up with the pannikin the little drop of water that oozed into the hollow, then transferring it from the pannikin into the billy, continue the operation till sufficient was gained. Upon boiling, a thick scum rose to the surface, which had to be skimmed off with a piece of bark; when plenty of tea and sugar was put in, the composition was not so very bad, it was however a great change from the luxurious living at St. Kilda. Our first repast did not taste very sweet, moreover, we had before our eyes, the creek that was to be crossed, and the hill to be ascended.

We harnessed the horses with sundry misgivings. We had camped close to a paling, and the owner coming out of a little shanty,

entered into conversation. He evidently thought that neither of us had been brought up to the rough life we were leading, and threw sundry doubts both upon my driving and the power of my horses to ascend the opposite hill, but he added, "There is a man in this neighbourhood who is a driver, and who has some real horses, let him lend you his beasts, and take the dray up the hill." Nothing loth, we accepted the offer; the man was found, and proud to show off the superiority of his own horses, he unharnessed mine, and put his in their place. Their efforts did not seem to promise much, for after just moving, they backed and allowed the dray to roll upon the paling, which to the owner's indignation was knocked down, but as I told him he could not complain, for it was the result of his own advice. The horses were very fine ones, and did their best, they carried us over the creek in good style, but the hill was too much for them; there was one pinch they could not manage, half-way up, they would

drag the dray, and then their strength being spent, it would, notwithstanding all our efforts to stay the wheels, roll down again. The driver was furious, but he had to borrow a yoke of bullocks to assist him. The man that drove them was the sole specimen of the class I have ever met with in Australia, who neither drank nor swore at his cattle, and was a professed Christian. There was a strong feeling of sympathy between the man and his beasts, and they seemed to obey his voice after a manner that I had never before seen. He assured me that if he laid the whip on to them, their bellow would be heard a mile off, and they would afterwards cry like children. With their aid we reached the top of the hill, and it was with some difficulty that I could persuade these kind fellows to accept of any recompense for their services. During the afternoon's journey we had one more hill to mount, and this the horses constantly refused, jibbing at the steep part, and allowing the dray to roll back ; at last they

went at their work with a will; part of the loading fell off, and frightened at the noise, they started at a gallop. We were only too willing to let them go, and at the top they were easily checked. Upon examination we found that three hundred-weight of white lead had fallen off, and was now at the bottom of the hill. The goods on the dray were of too heavy a description to unload, otherwise we would have done so, and taken the empty conveyance down the hill; but not being able to do this, we had to fetch the white lead on our shoulders. It was in fifty-six pound tins; the sun was burning hot, and the distance half a mile, the perspiration stood in beads outside our rough shirts, and when the task was accomplished we threw ourselves upon the ground praying for a drop of water. There was none to be had; the only drinkable with us was brandy, of which we had a small keg. We poured some into the billy, and each of us drank about three quarters of a pint. It gave us strength

to reach our camping ground, neither did I, at the moment, feel any ill effects from this fiery potation.

We pitched our camp close to a most refreshing stream of water, and having somewhat quenched our thirst, we prepared to cook our suppers, but on searching for the bag in which the materials for this repast had been placed, it was nowhere to be found. We had eaten little all day, and to go supperless to bed was an idea not to be very pleasantly entertained. Remembering my exploit about the fryingpan, I thought it was possible to either borrow or purchase some necessaries from any other party that might camp near us. The road we were on was, on account of the steep hill, but little used, and at nightfall we could only distinguish two fires, and they were at a distance of two or three miles. Taking care to guide myself by the stars, so that if any fresh fires were lighted I should know the direction of my own, I made towards the nearest. Upon coming up

to the light, I was extremely amused at the group gathered round the burning logs. It consisted of three gentlemen, who had put on what they thought was a rough-looking dress; coats with big sporting buttons, long waistcoats, top boots, etc. There was a man with them, evidently a servant, brought from England, for he was doing the work whilst they looked on. A handsome tilt cart, of home manufacture, was close by, and from all appearance heavily laden with their necessary comforts. The cloth was laid upon a large tool-box, plates, knives, forks, and glass tumblers were there in abundance. Fowls, hams, preserved meats, flanked by some bottles of wine, graced their board. Over all an elegant spirit lamp, protected by a shade, shed its subdued light. The whole party had most likely landed in the colony three or four days before, and were making their way up to the gold fields, where they would quickly learn that all the gimcracks they had so carefully selected in England, and

had perhaps exhibited to their admiring friends, were useless. When I came up, the gentlemen were turning over some mining tools, and the servant was vainly trying to cut some wood with an English axe. Bushrangers, without being seen, could easily have picked the lot of them off as they stood in the light of the fire, yet when they heard my step, they dropped their tools, and each man's hand dived into the pockets of their broad flapped coats after their revolvers. One of them actually drew his pistol out, but his hand shook to such an alarming extent that there was more chance of shooting one of his comrades than myself. The fright was so eminently ludicrous that laughingly I asked them if they meant all to fire at one unarmed man. "Was I by myself?" "Yes." "What did I want?" "Some supper, and that having travelled all day, I should feel obliged if they would let me have a fowl, some slices of ham, a bottle of wine, and some tea, to take to my mate, who was waiting for my

return at the distant fire." Seeing that I wanted a favour, and that I was in earnest, their fears gave way, and they became as consequential and as domineering as many of their class at home. "Did I take them for new chums—to be imposed upon by so stale a trick as the tale of lost provisions?" "Well," I answered, "new chums you certainly are, and about as green as ever my eyes lighted upon, and as selfish and as mean as most of those who have never felt want. You think yourselves, I dare say, mighty fine, with your box of tools, that will all smash when they are tried on hard wood, and your mining tools that are not worth their carriage, and your servant who will bolt upon the slightest touch of the gold fever, and your old English axe that won't chop, and which you confidently believe is the finest manufactured article the world can produce; why, you miserable, stingy rascals, I would not exchange my American axe for every article that your stupid old cart, that will fall to pieces at the

first hot wind, contains." This little bit of abuse did them good, and after some more talking they asked me if I really meant what I said about their tools, for they had bought them at one of the best houses in London. Upon my assuring them that they were not only a great deal too elaborate, but were much too heavy for use, and their best plan was to leave them where they were now camped, they wanted to know what tools were used for mining; and they could hardly be brought to the belief that American shovels and picks were at present the only articles required. The idea of England not making these equal to America exceeded their belief. I pointed to their man who had again commenced chopping away at a gum tree, and plainly told them that the poor fellow might chop away till midnight without bringing the tree down, but if they came over to my fire I would lend them one of Collin's American axes, as sharp as a razor, and as tough as steel could be made, and in

half an hour their man might bring the tree to the ground. In a shy, proud manner, they then wanted me to partake of their supper, but this I declined, telling them that in Australia refused meat and drink was never afterwards accepted, and in all likelihood they would soon understand the meaning of hunger and thirst. With these words I turned my back upon them, and made the best of my way to the next fire. The men gathered around it were of a very different stamp to those I had just left; they were evidently miners, for along with their tightly strapped bundle of blankets was a light American shovel. In trowsers and blue shirts they sat around the fire, smoking the blackest of little pipes. An old gun was near them, with which they had killed three or four wood-pigeons, that were now on little spits roasting for a *bonne bouche*, to be eaten just before turning in. They must have heard my approach, yet none of them showed the slightest symptoms of fear; when close upon them,

"Good night, mate," and a sharp glance was all their salutation. The few months I had been in the colony had taught me to at once distinguish the various classes into which our curious population was divided. One peculiar discernment I had caught up, which I could never communicate or explain, and that was being able at the first glance to detect an old convict; and these men were beyond mistake of this class. They hardly gave me time to tell them of my position, before they interrupted me with, "There, hold hard, mate; that is enough. What do you want? Here is bread, sugar, tea, mutton; we have got lots; take enough for to-morrow's breakfast, and we can spare you a pinch of pepper and salt. Won't you have a nobler?" So, sitting down over the fire, I took my brandy and water with these kind-hearted fellows, who, having known want themselves, were only too happy to assist others in a like position. My account of the gentleman party at the other fire greatly amused

them, and we all quietly chuckled away at the thought of how very soon all their quaint tools would prove useless on the gold fields, and how their nice white table cloth, hams, fowls, and preserved meats, would vanish away, and their place be occupied by the stump of a tree, damper, mutton chops, and good clasp knife. Seeing the gun lying on the ground, I could not resist hinting that if they would only steal up to the other party, and fire the gun twice over their heads, and then whisper in the dark so that the gentlemen could hear, they would take to their heels, and all the eatables would fall a prey to the first party who happened to walk that way. From the grin on the men's faces, I could see that my hint would most likely be taken. On leaving, I pointed my thumb over my shoulder, and said "From t'other side," (meaning Van Diemens Land), "and how is the one-armed man?" They looked amazed, and said "But you are not from there?" "Why no, but for all that I

know a thing or two." And giving a half laugh, I made my way back to my own fire, where we had a most comfortable supper, not forgetting, as we could not get milk, just to soften our tea with a wee drop of brandy. During the night I heard a gun fired twice, and had not the slightest doubt that the gentlemen had been frightened away from their good things, and that my last acquaintances were making merry over what was left. For my part in the affair, I consoled myself by thinking that at the expense of a fowl or so, these gentlemen would be able to write home a good flaming account of how in the night, they had been attacked by a desperate gang of bushrangers.

The next morning I felt sick and ill, and at the end of the day's journey my fever had returned, and with it great thirst. This attack was doubtless brought on by exposure, and the quantity of raw brandy I had drank. A night's rest, I hoped, would restore me, but in the

morning I was worse ; and what made it still more vexatious was that our day's journey lay through the Black Forest. There was no help, we had nothing with us that would contain water, the day was tremendously hot, and from the very commencement I felt great thirst. For two hours I struggled on, not knowing where water was to be found, and just when my thirst became almost intolerable, my eye fell upon a public house, situate half-way through the forest. My first feeling was to precipitate myself into the house, and drink beer to any extent—one draught seemed worth a life, and it was the hardest struggle I ever had to restrain the impulse and pass on. They would have laughed at the idea of supplying water, and anything else would, I well knew, have either been my death, or the cause of a long illness. They might have *sold* water, and I have since been surprised that I never thought of this, but my judgment must have become distempered. How I passed over the next six miles

I don't know; a dimness, or rather haze, had come over my eyes, and I was not far from being frantic. When water was reached, the whole strength of the young Doctor was used to prevent me drinking much at a time. These few hours of only partial thirst, gave me some idea of what others have undergone whose tongues, swelling with their agony, have hung out of their mouths, to be covered with flies. The idea of death by thirst, to this day, gives me a shudder of horror.

Rest and a long sleep somewhat restored me, and the next day I was able to continue my journey. We were rather overloaded, and it was a fortnight from the time we left Melbourne before we reached Sandhurst. The place looked very desolate, many of the tents had gone, and yet there was a great deal of bustle; men with their swags, (i. e.) blankets, tools, and in some cases, rolled up tents, were waiting about, and here and there they were collected into groups, and loading drays with

all their moveables; there was a deal of suppressed excitement upon each man's face. Too desirous of reaching my own store, I did not stay to learn the cause of this unusual gathering among the mining population. Then the news was immediately told, "There is a grand rush; there is a new gold field discovered at Tarrengower, it is said to exceed in richness anything that has yet been discovered. Several men have returned with their gold which they say was found at only a few feet deep." This information was soon confirmed by an experienced miner, in whom I had every confidence; he had been over to see the country, and assured me that although he had hardly seen the colour of gold at the new diggings, yet men who were working close to him were every day taking out pounds weight of the precious metal; that another party had made such an immense find, that they were off to England at once; and that he had received a quiet hint that Government, to prevent too great a rush of

the people to the new gold field, were in possession of information of enormous finds that they would not communicate to the public. This and a great deal more was poured into my bewildered ears. It was received as an accomplished fact that Bendigo was done for, no more gold would be raised, and in a short time its very existence as a gold field would be forgotten, and it would be again used as a sheep-run. If the people on the spot were so deceived, how can it be wondered at that those at a distance could not form any true judgment of the circumstances? Not only were the miners moving off as fast as drays could be found to carry their swags, but storekeepers were pulling down their buildings, and carting their goods over to the new El Dorado. What I had so laboriously brought up was quite useless, not worth the carriage, much less the Melbourne price. My impulse was to pull down our own store, and throw my fate in with the throng. A night's reflection rather cooled this

feeling, and made me consider on what evidence of an *extensive* gold field were all these people throwing up their present occupations, and swarming over to a comparatively untried place. My short experience of the colony had shown me that there was no subject upon which people went so soon mad as new gold discoveries, and however careful the first finders might be, yet those to whom the tale was told seldom believed that they heard the whole truth, added on a little, the next did the same, till at last what had been a very modest announcement swelled into a most extravagant rumour. Some were carried away, others joined, till the stream of excitement became so strong, that even those who in their hearts disbelieved the story were swept away by the current. Upon making careful enquiries I found that this was by no means the first rush that had been made away from Bendigo; two or three had previously taken place, the one to Mac Ivor in particular having almost depopulated this locality; but

they had ended in disappointment to most of those concerned ; Mac Ivor the most promising having resolved itself into a little quiet gold field, upon which a small population could be employed. Under these circumstances prudence said "Don't go;" excitement said "Start at once." It was hard to remain doing nothing, in the midst of a population intensely moved by the stories of immense finds, and who were all seeking for the means to start. If our goods were unsaleable, I found that this rush might in another way be turned to account. We had some horses out at paddock, who were suffering from various complaints incidental to rough work and exposure ; these were brought in, and sold at immense prices, the purchaser caring very little beyond being able to reach the new gold field ; all our old drays were disposed of in the same way, it is to be hoped they did not break down before they reached their destination, but if I had been obliged to go with them, my fears on this head would

have been very considerable. We then stuck up notice that we would start a dray to carry stores (of other people's) and swags of the miners. In a few hours our two drays and all our remaining horses were engaged, and having started them off, I sat down, surprised to find that six weeks good trading would not have given me the profits derived from this new rush that at one time looked so very unfavourable to our prospects. Matters turned out even better than we expected, for when our drays reached Tarrengower, the tide had begun to turn; many were disappointed, and our drays were rehired to bring back both stores and diggers. In a few weeks a great number had returned, and these, with the number of new chums that were constantly coming in, restored our population to its former number, and business went on as merrily as ever.

CHAPTER VI.

To make the town permanent, and give the inhabitants a real interest in its welfare, it was essential that they should hold the land upon which their various tenements were built. This had often been promised, and at last the townspeople were gratified by the sight of surveyors measuring and chaining. In due time the plans appeared, and as they moved the position of the township a hundred feet or so back from the road, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction. The fortunate ones who had any buildings that could lay the slightest claim to permanency made all haste to secure their little spots to themselves. To make quite sure

that nobody at the Government auction should overbid them, and thus take from them the locality which by their own exertions they had made so valuable for business purposes, they called in an appraiser, and he placed the most absurd valuations, sometimes amounting to thousands, upon miserable slab buildings. By these means they hoped to get the land for a song, but Government was far too wide awake to be thus done out of the true value of the land they had to sell. Just in proportion as excessive valuations were put upon the property, did Government raise the upset price of the land. The only person who really profited in the end was the appraiser, who being paid by commission, must have realized a good harvest. The spot we had occupied for some time, was declared to be too low, and this was perfectly true; for on one occasion the creek burst its banks and swept through our store, carrying away no end of goods, and leaving behind most unmistakeable signs of its presence in a

thick layer of clay, that spoilt and rotted much of what was left. To a certain extent we felt ourselves aggrieved by the Government decision, for on a slight pressure being applied, they afterwards sold land in Bridge street, still lower than our own, and by not carrying out the main road according to the original plan, they created a feud among the townspeople that exists to this day.

The valuations were so heavy that on the day of sale, we were only too happy in finding a spot, at all near the good situations, without any valued building erected upon it. The doubts about the ultimate success of the township was in those days very great, but before the end of the third day's sale, the land bought at the first had gone up fifty per cent in value, and to my great surprise we let off, within a week, half the land we had bought, at such a rate that in eighteen months we received back from the rents the whole of our purchase money. Ours was by no means one of the most fortunate

purchases. There was one gentleman who bought half an acre for five hundred pounds. At the time he was laughed at; for the ground was full of holes dug by the miners. But he was an old colonist, and neither cared for laughter nor sneers, he foresaw the future better than those who were amusing themselves at his expense. He laboured with his own hands in filling up the holes, and many a cartload of earth did they require before anything like a firm foundation was obtained. He then built some wooden shops, and arranged so that without much cost he had a large auction mart in the midst of his purchase. The property all let immediately, and he realized the extraordinary rental of between three and four thousand a year. All the best situations increased equally in value, and what seems most strange to an Englishman, rents for good shops in the best parts of the town, were equal to anything of the sort in London. For instance, a brick house, two stories high, with a shop of

sixteen feet frontage, taken as a tobacconist's, let for eighteen pounds a week. When the day came for the town to be moved back, and everybody to shift to their new plot of ground, which the day before was occupied by somebody else, who in his turn had to find his own particular spot, the confusion became very great. People were not quite sure about the continuance of the township, and did little more than erect wooden buildings. Having had possession of our ground for some time, we were better off than our neighbours, and were ready to commence business, for our new wooden store was nearly finished, that is to say, it had its side walls up, and the roof was on; certainly the ends wanted covering in, and the divisions to be made, but these little wants were not thought much of in the colony, and when all others were in confusion, we were able to open and commence business. We had bought largely of building materials, and although everybody had purchased in Melbourne what they thought

was sufficient for their own use, yet when they came to build they always found themselves wanting in something. We were the only large holders in the district, Melbourne was too far off, and the prices of all materials for building went up to an extravagant height.

The frame-work of a wooden house is generally made of hard wood; the outside is covered with deal weather-boarding often not more than three quarters of an inch thick. The divisions consisting of hard wood up-rights, put about four feet apart, against them, to the height of three feet, lining-boards are nailed, and over all, from the top to the bottom, calico is stretched; this is papered over, and to the eye looks exceedingly well, but if a stranger should tumble against it, a little higher than the lining-boards are placed, he would infallibly split this slight partition, and tumble through into the next room. The ceiling of such a house is simply made by drawing calico tightly across the top of each room, and if this

calico is papered, the house is considered to have received an extra touch of finish. There are objections to this style of architecture, for the roof being nearly always made of iron, the hot sun has a great effect upon it, and the calico ceiling is not sufficiently thick to keep the heat out. In consequence of the partitions being very thin, conversation can be carried on by persons in different apartments, so that, with the exception of not being seen, it is very much the same as living in one large room.

The question is often asked of Australians, do you think so and so is a likely man to succeed in the colonies? The answer is generally a shrug of the shoulders, and how can I tell. This reply is based upon experience, for the changes that take place in the character, when removed from old associations, or from the restraints imposed by English society, are so great, that it is almost impossible to predict the future of any emigrant, except one addicted to drink, for the warm dry climate increases

the inclination, and in a short time he becomes a confirmed drunkard. There was one emigrant who went out to Australia, whose success in life has always seemed so extraordinary, that I will relate what I know of his history, to show what may be done under the most adverse circumstances. Whilst blasting a tree in either the West or East Indies, the gunpowder exploded in his face, and not only was his person much injured, but he lost the use of his eyesight, becoming totally blind. He returned to England, and by means of his old friends, strove to earn his daily bread by executing small commissions for tea, coals, books, anything in fact by which it was possible for a blind man to turn the honest penny. Like many others, he became excited by the news from the Gold Fields of Australia, and made up his mind to risk the little he had in an adventure to the land of promise. Upon first landing, he commenced with a store, and whether the people about him were peculiarly honest in looking after his in-

terest, or whether his infirmity induced customers to come to his store, it is impossible to say; but when I was first introduced to him, he was established as the owner of a very snug hotel in the neighbourhood of Melbourne. His great desire was to open business as an hotel-keeper on the gold fields. From his own plans, he had an hotel built at Sandhurst, and if not under his eyesight, it was certainly finished under his own supervision. What was more, he did business, and made a most extraordinary speculation. Epsom was then some three or four miles distant from Bendigo, and some agricultural land had been offered for sale in its neighbourhood, but the soil being very bad, some hundreds of acres put up for sale had remained unsold. This blind man, listening daily to accounts of gold fields, and being obliged to sit lonely for hours, had formed in his own mind a map of the country, and what we with our eyes open could not see, this blind man saw plainly with his mind's eye. It was

this, that the run of gold must lead directly into these despised barren acres at Epsom. He bought the land from Government at a pound an acre, and soon reaped a rich harvest for his mental foresight. The lead of gold did run down into this land, and he was enabled to sell a portion of it at an enormous price, and from the small quantity that he sold, the owner raised such a revenue in granting permissions for miners to dig, that he is enabled to support his son at an English college, and the joint revenue of the blind man and the one he sold a portion to, must now amount, from this source alone, to four or five thousand a year. Neither was this his sole speculation, and each one of them seemed to turn out successful. He was asked to build a theatre, refused to do so, but when others had built and failed, he bought up the building for a mere song, and carried it on successfully.

Upon one occasion, having to send fifty ounces of gold down to Melbourne by a certain

time, we found ourselves unable to collect it together before the escort left. As it was very particular that this quantity of gold should be in Melbourne by the day promised, I thought it best to bring in a miserable old hack that we had out at grass, and take it down myself. From this course I was most earnestly persuaded, being assured that the roads were still infested by bushrangers, who kept a sharp look out for all persons, and particularly horsemen, coming from the Gold Fields. Seeing that I was quite resolved, they advised me to take my revolver. From having knowingly under-rated the danger, I was foolishly obstinate, and declined to take any arms. For the first day, after leaving Bendigo, I made tolerable progress, but towards the middle of the next, and just on entering the Black Forest, the miserable hack that I was riding became completely knocked up, and neither my heavy whip nor long spur would induce him to move at anything beyond a slow walk. Riding

a knocked up horse, and with fifty ounces of gold in my pocket, my position was not a very pleasant one, for of all the dangerous spots on the road, the Black Forest was most decidedly the worst. To put a good face on the matter was my best resource, and if the brute of a horse would only walk, why that was the pace at which we must proceed. After going two or three miles, my worst expectations were realized. Three men emerged from the forest into the road, my first look at their faces convinced me that they were not only convicts, but meant mischief, in a word, I had fallen amongst Philistines, and was in the hands of the bushrangers. They made their arrangements quietly and orderly, one fellow walked in front, another at my side, and another behind me. Fortunately my clothes were particularly old, and would have realized little beyond the price of old rags, and my horse was in such a miserable condition that he would have been rather an incumbrance than an aid

to any party wishing to make any rapid movements. It was owing to these circumstances that the fellow who walked by my side, and took them all in at a glance, did not begin his attack at once. For my own part, I made up my mind not to be robbed without striking one good blow at the fellow's head, that should at least make him remember me, and for this purpose, slipped my hand down to the thin end of my riding whip, and as the top was rather heavy, I felt myself possessed of a weapon not to be despised. The fellow commenced the conversation in a most ominous manner with "I say, mate, do you know that the bushrangers are out?" "Well," was my reply, looking down upon him, "most likely they are, what then?" "Why they robbed me of my gold yesterday." "Did they now, you had not much to lose I guess, and perhaps are looking about to see what you can pick up on the road, but you won't pick up much, for people are not such fools now as to carry down their own gold,

they send it by escort." To this the fellow, with a most tremendous imprecation, assented. Whilst this little conversation was going forward, the scoundrel in front kept looking backward at his mate, wondering why he did not commence operations. Seeing that the fellow was rather nonplussed by my coolness, and that he did not wish perhaps to create a chase by plundering a man who had nothing worthy of being robbed, I thought it best not to give him too much time to make up his mind, and resolved to use one more effort to rouse the old horse into something beyond a walk; so digging the spurs most viciously into his side, and at the same time bringing the whip heavily across him, he, to my great joy, broke into a trot, and with a "wish you good luck, mate," I passed beyond the reach of the first man's arm. The one ahead, upon hearing my horse's hoofs, turned smartly round, thinking that perhaps his services were required; but receiving no sign from his mate, he let me pass, bestowing

upon me a scowl of the most malignant description. This it was not my place to notice, and giving him my salutation, and a laughing hope that he would have better luck another time, I, to my own surprise, found that whilst the scoundrels were being slowly left behind, my skin was whole and the gold still in my pocket. I did not dare to look over my shoulder, but I *felt* that the three bushrangers had joined, and were talking over my probable possessions. To keep up my present speed was my great object, and if they pursued to ride to the last moment, and then, abandoning my horse, to take to my heels, trusting that being blown by the chase, it would be easy to give them leg bail. My progress was most unexpectedly stopped by a deep ditch that, for the purpose of draining off some water, had been cut across the road. To spur the brute on and lift him to his leap, was the work of a moment; to my great chagrin, instead of even attempting to jump across, he suddenly stopped at the brink, and the ground

giving way, his fore feet slowly slipped in, and he rolled to the bottom. It all occurred so quickly, that before I could quite extricate myself, the brute was down, with my arm underneath him. To get up on the other side, and drag him by the bridle out of the ditch, took but a few minutes. Before I could mount, the three scoundrels came running up, with the evident intention of at least seeing what I had in my pockets. My arm was giving me intense pain, and from being unable to move it, I made pretty sure the bone was broken, and I saw that my gold was not only in the power of these villains, but any chance of resistance was perfectly hopeless. My annoyance was so great, and the pain of my arm so acute, that instead of turning upon these fellows, and asking them to deal tenderly with me, I did, in my passion, the wisest thing possible. I blessed them up hill and down dale, in a language they perfectly understood, and what was more, they listened to my outpour-

ings for some minutes, thinking perhaps that one who showed so little fear in cursing them, could not have much to lose. Fortunately they had not much time to make up their minds, for to my great joy, two drays turned the corner of the road, and the three bushrangers, thinking discretion the better part of valour, slunk away into the forest. Having told the drivers of my escape from being robbed, and tumble into the ditch, they allowed me to fasten my horse behind their dray, and ride inside. Upon examination, my arm was found unbroken, but during my ride, they employed themselves in rubbing it well with brandy, and whether it was friction or brandy, the arm was well in two or three days.

Upon emerging from the forest, I again mounted, and the horse being a little refreshed, pushed on to the Gap Inn. Being desirous of avoiding any very queer customers, my first demand of the landlord was, "can you give me a bedroom to myself?" "Why, y—e—s." "Well,

I want none of your y—e—ses, can I have one or not?" "You shall." "That is enough; who have you in the parlour?" "A regular rough lot, come from some new rush I think." "Never mind, bring my supper in." So after seeing my horse well taken care of, I went into the common room, or parlour, as it was by courtesy called, and saw what the landlord had so truly described as a rough lot. They had finished their supper, and were smoking and drinking in great glee. Whilst partaking of my own repast, their conversation amused me, and gradually the style and talk of one of the men carried me back to old England, and the description I had often heard of a Captain in the Army, who was a tremendous swell, kept his yacht, went to the Mediterranean, had his hunters and little shooting box, betted heavily, and hand and glove with some of the first families in the land, looked lazily around to see on which fair lady he should throw his handkerchief, but one was too fair, another too dark,

and once when he had almost made up his mind, a treacherous gust of wind revealed a pair of thick ancles, and he was thrown back again into a chaos of doubtful claims upon his notice. Before he had quite emerged from this state, one of his creditors pounced upon him, and he became the inmate of a prison. He was not alone in his trouble, another officer shared his fate. Their debts were hopelessly heavy, and before detainers were lodged, they sold their commissions and took themselves off to Australia, in quest of adventures, and it is to be hoped of gold, in order to pay the debts they had left behind.

I had never seen the captain, but the more I heard of the conversation, the stronger became the feeling perhaps this is the man. Listening to catch his name was useless, for it was evidently not known to his comrades, by whom he was designated by the rather common cognomen of "Bill." Seeing no very strong reasons why my curiosity should not be gratified,

I joined their table and, addressing Bill, I asked how long he had been out from England, informing him at the same time that, though never having had the pleasure of being introduced, his family and name were known to me. After a good stare, he replied, "no, you are mistaken, no one about here knows me." For answer, I walked round to his seat, and whispered in his ear, "You are Captain ——, late of the —— regiment, and you have Captain ——, late of the same regiment with you." If he had been electrified, he could not have been more startled, and with an oath he wanted to know who the devil I was? "Ah, my friend, you see I do know you; but there is not the slightest reason why you should know me; let us have a nobler together." He tried hard to learn who I was, and meaning to tell him in the morning, the more he tried, the more determined I was to keep up the secret. It never occurred to me that he might think me somebody out from England in pursuit. The next

morning, upon enquiring after the man who had been talking rather big the previous night, the landlord informed me, that after I had retired, Bill, as the man was called, had made most particular enquiries after me, had even insisted upon going out to see my horse, and the inspection had only increased his perplexity; and, having left orders to be called very early, he had departed before cock-crow.

During my stay in Melbourne, preparations were made for receiving the new Governor, Sir Charles Hotham, and if he had been some General upon whom the safety of the whole country depended, the excitement and enthusiasm could not have been greater; and when at last it was announced that the steamer which bore this hitherto unknown and untried Governor, was in sight, the enthusiasm almost partook of madness, the shops were closed, flags waved from the windows, cannon fired, the church bells rung, and the whole population turned out *en masse* to welcome the representative

of our Sovereign the Queen. For at least three days he was the most popular Governor that ever trod the shores of Victoria, then the tide began to turn. He had a most difficult task before him, in re-organizing and reducing the whole of the Civil Service, and bringing the expenditure of the colony within the bounds of its income. Many of the officials were summarily discharged, salaries reduced, and some of these dismissed public servants pursued him with the most inveterate hatred. Unfortunately his manners, which partook more of the character of the quarter-deck than Government House, afforded too ready a handle for the malcontents, and above all he was considered parsimonious both in his private living and public entertainments. A series of letters appeared in the *Argus*, giving a suppositious account of how the head of a Government department was seen leaving the ball-room of his Excellency with his hand upon his lower regions, after having partaken of some hard beer which was

served to him, instead of the more usual beverage, champagne. These fictitious letters were written with great humour, the last of them being complaints of the unconstitutional proceeding of dismissing an official simply because the Governor chose to treat his guests with hard beer, which produced the usual result, a stomach ache. The newspapers went home when there was a dearth of either foreign or domestic news, and the Times seized upon these letters as if they were really true, and wrote a leading article, giving them as examples of colonial manners, and showing what a parody upon constitutional government it was to dismiss an important public servant because his politeness had compelled him, at a Government entertainment, to drink hard beer. In due course the Times newspaper, with its pungent leading article upon the manners of the colonists and their parody upon constitutional government, was received in Australia. When it arrived, the Governor was most unpopular ;

there was a ministerial crisis, and party feeling ran high, but the Times leader created a shout of laughter that ran from one end of the colony to the other. Whether it was the sense of the ridiculous light in which he had been held up before the world, or the political difficulties under which he laboured, I know not, but the Governor had a fit, which quickly carried him off; his official career shewing a lamentable instance of the uncertainty of popular favour.

There is a great difficulty in undeceiving English people concerning the state of society in Australia, they will sometimes allow that perhaps the society of Melbourne may be just bearable, but when they have said that, they class themselves among those who are inclined to be the most liberal, and the idea that residents on the gold fields can be anything but roughs, never enters their mind. They quite forget that although we have a large number of old convicts among us, the results of England's civilization, yet they are gradually

wearing out, and that the great bulk of our population consists of the most energetic portion of the English middle class, who, finding no elbow room in England, have had the energy and the courage to emigrate to a land where there is room for all comers. But between this class and the old convicts there is no doubt another very large division, who although unconvicted of any crime, have found themselves in scrapes which have compelled them to leave their own country. A very good specimen of this portion of our community was Mr. W. W. Haycock, who was, just about this time, beginning to take a prominent position in the affairs of the Bendigo district. He was an American, and so prosperous were all his business transactions, that he rapidly rose from a very small way of business to being one of the principal merchants in the town. Indeed nothing could be done without Mr. Haycock gave it his sanction; his name was the one first sought for in all companies, and was considered a tower of

strength. In large towns it is difficult for one man to fill the public mind, but in small communities it is different, and seemingly without seeking for it, Mr. Haycock was the most popular man in the place. To his countrymen he had a most open hand, and in his prosperity did not forget those who were not so fortunate, and many a successful trader owed his position to the liberality of the great American trader. For my own part I had an unconscious sort of antipathy against the man, and in the few dealings I had with him, he shewed nothing deserving of the high encomiums and praise that were so freely lavished upon him. His prosperity seemingly went on increasing, his credit stood remarkably high, and we were astonished one day by receiving the following communication by express,—

“ Confidential. Melbourne.”

“ Haycock, we believe, has bolted; we inclose a draft of Two Hundred and Fifty Pounds, payable at his office in Sandhurst, which he

gave us a week since, obtain the money if possible, remit to Melbourne, and keep this communication a secret, for we may be mistaken."

This was signed by a very dear friend, and our first duty was to try and get the money. Upon application at the office, we were told that Mr. Haycock was absent in Melbourne, would be back in two or three days, but that they had no money on hand; I however pressed the matter, pointing out that the order was made payable on demand, and that we wanted the money, etc.; and so good was Haycock's credit, that his clerk went out, and returned in a few minutes with the money, having borrowed it in the town.

We were not kept long in suspense, the news came up by post a week afterwards, and spread over the town with marvellous rapidity, in the streets groups collected together, wondering and amazed. Haycock's name was so continually and vehemently uttered, that there could be no doubt that the secret was out—and I was

soon asked if I had not heard the news. "Well, but what is it?" "Why Haycock has bolted." "Oh, is that all? why I knew it a week ago." "Nonsense, my dear fellow, the news has only just come up." "Well, for all that, I knew it a week since." "That is strange, do you lose anything by him?" "No, we had no dealings with him." "But so-and-so must go smash also, and with them you will lose something." "Why no," was my pleasant reply, "for we settled up with all those houses last week." The excitement in the town became so great that it was thought desirable to call a meeting of the creditors that same evening, so that everybody might have an opportunity of giving vent to their overcharged feelings. When the creditors met, case after case was laid bare, in which he had deprived people of their all; one or two instances will suffice to show the confidence placed in him. One man, who had made much money in store and hotel keeping, met

with a serious accident which rendered him incapable of work, and he determined to return home to America, and for security placed the whole of his money in Haycock's hands, he promising to meet him in Melbourne and pay over the cash; the poor man took his passage, and day after day waited; at last the ship sailed without him, and as Haycock disappeared at the same time, the poor fellow came to the conclusion that he had gone off in the ship, made use of the cabin that he had fitted up for himself, and taken his money at the same time. Then another told how he had placed the whole produce of his farm, including his working bullocks, in Haycock's hands, and had been defrauded of the lot. These and similar stories worked the indignation of the meeting up to a high pitch, and an American deservedly respected for his high honour and probity rose up and said, "I can stand this no longer, whether you will think I have acted wrongly in concealing it, I

know not, but the name of Haycock is an assumed one. He was brought up in the same town as myself, and entered at an early age into a large establishment of which he eventually became the principal. He was very much liked, and under his superintendence the business rapidly increased, and it was thought that he was making a large fortune; when a sad occurrence marred his expectations, a fire broke out upon the premises, and he was almost ruined. However his friends assembled round him, and by their assistance he was enabled to build up premises larger than he had formerly occupied, and so great was the sympathy felt for him that his business was greatly increased. This went on for some time, when to the astonishment of everybody it was rumoured that he (whom I may just as well continue to call Haycock) had bolted, carrying away with him an immense sum of money. The story turned out to be but too true, and many suspicious circumstances were now remembered relating

to the fire that had destroyed his premises ; how far true they were it is impossible to say. He was next heard of down South, among the Slave States, where he married a very lovely girl, the daughter of a planter, and three days after their marriage he deserted her, and started for California, where he worked for some time, with but indifferent success. He here met with his brother-in-law, who bitterly upbraided him with his conduct towards his sister, and the quarrel produced a duel. At the first fire Haycock shot his brother-in-law through the heart. The indignation of the people was so great that he thought it best to make himself scarce. It is now some years since I was mining upon the Bendigo flat, and one day when I came up out of my hole, to have a smoke and rest myself, who should I see sitting upon the brink of a neighbouring claim but Haycock, preparing his materials for a quiet smoke like myself. 'Hullo,' says I, 'is that you?' calling him by his right name. 'Hush,' was his rejoinder, 'don't betray

me, I am passing under a new name now, it is Haycock, so please to call me by that. You see I am working hard, and for the future mean to act differently.' Well, gentlemen, what was to be done? I saw no use in betraying him, besides he was far from fortunate in his mining operations; and leaving that, he erected a little tent, and commenced buying old tools, such as broken picks, damaged cradles, mending them up, and then re-selling. You all know how he prospered, and how his little tent soon became a large store, and then how he emerged into an agent, cattle dealer, and general merchant. All this time I watched his conduct narrowly, and could see nothing amiss, besides he was a sad man, and in the midst of his success, it seemed to me, that his former crimes weighed heavily upon him; for many of you will remember how rare was his smile, and a laugh proceeding from those lips, I think, you have none of you ever heard."

This was the substance, although not the

exact words of the story told to the astounded meeting. Many bitterly complained that Haycock's history had been so long concealed, and blamed his brother American for not publishing it to the world; but here his own probity and upright character spoke loudly for him, and it must be acknowledged that his position was a most painful one. Was he called upon to blast the character of an erring brother, who was seemingly by diligence and exertion striving to redeem the past? After having heard the history of his former life, it was universally considered that he had fled the country with a large sum of money, but subsequent events proved this to be wrong. Some two or three weeks afterwards, Cobb's office was startled by hearing that some clothes had been found on the sea shore, and that a letter from Haycock was found in them, stating his intention to drown himself. The story was considered a fabrication, but the tide having cast a dead body on shore, several who had known him

went out to see it, and it was recognised as being Haycock's. A coroner's inquest was held, and a verdict given in accordance with the facts. A very minute investigation was now set on foot, and it was proved that he had absconded with little or no money, that a barber had shaved off his long beard, that he pawned a pistol that he had with him, and must have wandered about in a very desolate part of the country a long time without food; not having the moral courage to face his creditors, he determined upon suicide, and thus a career full of many changes, and stained with great crimes, was closed in misery, despair, and murder.

CHAPTER VII.

THE great questions that about this time were agitating the press on the gold fields, were first of all how were their various townships to be supported when all the gold was extracted from the earth? and secondly, from whence did the gold come which the diggers found in the gullies? They were both difficult questions to answer, and with regard to the first, it was held by some, that the gold never would become exhausted, that the first miners were so careless, and threw away so much gold, that the earth would pay to work over and over again; the first part of this was certainly true, for the early miners found the ground so very

rich, that they disregarded much that those who came after them were willing enough to work; but as gold does not grow, it was evident that it was only a matter of time, and the whole of the gold would be extracted from the earth; indeed the ground after having been turned over two or three times, was found worthless for the pick and shovel men.

The ground at Bendigo had this peculiarity, that it was impregnated with gold from the top to the bottom, but owing to all the best of the earth at the bottom of the holes having been washed, the gold left was in too small a quantity to pay for the ordinary process. The plan had hitherto been for two or more miners to sink a hole, very much in appearance like an ordinary well, and when they came to the gold-bearing dirt, to drive in sideways all round the bottom of their hole, till they came to the end of their claim, and as these claims were close together, the ground was completely honeycombed, and in the rough process of

washing in a cradle a large quantity of fine gold was lost, and it was found that after washing this earth over two or three times, there was not enough gold left in the ground to pay for another washing, and a machine was invented, very much like a common pug mill. It consisted of a circular basin sunk about two feet in the earth, and varying from five to six feet in width, and lined with wood; an upright post was set in the middle, capable of revolving, to this was attached two horizontal poles, to which were fastened harrows, the whole being worked by a horse going round and round. The earth from the very top was cast into these puddling machines, and with the aid of water, the harrows reduced it to a paste, and the gold being heavy, fell to the bottom; the slush was let off, a fresh quantity of earth was thrown in, and so the process went on, till the stones accumulated and prevented any more earth being worked up; what was left in the mill was taken out and washed in the cradle, and the gold ob-

tained. These puddling machines rapidly increased in number; fifteen hundred of them being at one time at work, and as each was supposed to do from fifteen to twenty cartloads of earth a day, it was soon evident that the whole valley of the Bendigo would be washed away down to the rock, many of the smaller gullies having been already washed away by the process; and if Bendigo was to depend upon gold produced from this description of mining, it was apparent that its days as a township were rapidly drawing to a close. The thick paste that was allowed to escape from these machines was called sludge, and soon became a great nuisance; it was poured into the creek, and formed a river of mud moving at the rate of about half a mile an hour, and as the heat extracted the water, its progress became slower and slower, and at last stopped altogether, and the inhabitants of the town beheld with dismay the outlet for the storm water, that fell in the winter very

heavily, completely closed up. The town was badly placed in the valley, and the sludge not content with filling up the creek, began to overspread the banks, and the inhabitants saw a sea of mud coming down upon them, which it was almost impossible to resist. Legislative interference was called for, and various expedients were tried to make this sludge "move on," but he is a difficult customer to deal with, and once the town has been subjected to a fearful inundation in consequence of the creek being filled up; eventually perhaps the sludge will be carried into the river Murray, sixty miles distant, but wherever it comes its progress commits great devastation.

In the summer months the supply of water was always so scarce that the puddlers had not sufficient to mix the earth up into a sufficiently thin state to allow the whole of the fine gold to fall through to the bottom of their machines, it being held in the thick paste; doubtless if time were allowed, most of these

fine particles would gravitate to the bottom, but as the miner is obliged to keep on using his machine, he cannot afford any great length of time to allow it to settle. After rain I have sometimes examined long drains cut in the earth, through which the sludge had to run before it got to the creek. And oftentimes I have found their sides completely covered with gold, thus shewing how much was lost in the sludge, when such a large quantity was deposited in so short a space.

- The other question, from whence does the gold come? was answered in a variety of ways. But the most generally received solution was this. All the gold was primarily contained in the Quartz Rock. The weather, and the action of the atmosphere broke up the solid rock, and the rain conveyed the disintegrated quartz and gold down into the valleys, where innumerable streams carried it along; the gold from its great weight being the first to drop to the bottom, and wherever there were eddies, bends,

or holes, in the river, there the gold would accumulate in the largest quantities. In the course of ages these streams were gradually filled up by accumulations of alluvial soil, and the principal part of the quartz rock that cropped out of the earth having been gradually destroyed, the deposit of gold in the upper alluvial would be but small. This theory agreed with all the known particulars of gold mining. For what is called the lead of gold, or the gutter, just went in that zig-zag course through a valley that an ancient stream would be very likely to follow, and what the miners call pockets of gold exactly correspond to holes that might occur in the stream. It followed, from this peculiar position of the gold, that persons sinking for it would continually be mistaken, and that those who sunk holes in a line with those previously sunk, in which gold had been found, were often disappointed, and those who took the chance of sinking a hole on the outside of what had appeared to be the

gutter were rewarded by finding that the stream had taken a bend towards them, and that their hole brought them exactly on the run of gold; if the rock dipped and formed a hollow, there the gold had collected in large quantities, and formed what the miners called a pocket. This disposition of the gold accounted for the disappointment of many persons engaged in this pursuit, who seeing their next neighbours take out large quantities of the precious metal, yet found none in their own claim, although it was sunk within a few feet of those who were making a fortune.

This answered the question, from whence did the gold come? but behind this there was the query if the quartz that cropped out of the earth contained gold, surely that which has been protected by the superincumbent earth must also contain some. The Bendigo Advertiser agitated this question, and told the miners that hitherto they had only scratched the earth by working the alluvial ground, but they must

now turn to a new work, and putting on one side the things that pertained to the infancy of mining, they must take a higher step and give their attention to working quartz, opening real mines that would be a source of wealth for generations yet unborn. About this time rumours began to float about that a German had opened a mine in the quartz rock, and had taken out fabulous quantities of the precious metal; but whenever questioned, this gentleman shook his head and said, "People talk great rubbish, there is plenty of work, but little gold." The number of his men seemed constantly on the increase, but still he went on assuring his questioners, about the plenty of work and the little gold. He however ordered a quartz crushing machine of a Mr. Gibbs, who eventually became one of the largest gold miners in the district, and to whom, I believe, is due the honour of being the first to erect a quartz crushing machine on the Bendigo district. There was also another

quartz mine opened, and the rumour grew stronger and stronger that the yield from these mines was something truly enormous, and the denials of the German seemed to be answered by the very jealous measures he took to keep everybody in ignorance as to his real proceedings; he naturally enough perhaps, employed only his own countrymen, and their small knowledge of the English language kept them from gossiping; besides in those days he invited no stranger to enter his works. Moved by these rumours of extraordinary wealth, I made an attempt to see the other mine, and was received with the greatest kindness; the owner pointed out his claim, or mine rather, in the quartz rock, which had been first opened by two Africans, from whom he had purchased it. He then took me to a heap of rock, which had been burnt previous to its being crushed, (this heap must have been about thirty tons,) and asked me to break any piece I chose; I did so, and was surprised at finding it sparkle

with gold; thinking I must have been mistaken, I took up piece after piece with the like result, and then began to calculate the probable value of the rock, but it seemed so enormous that I was completely overwhelmed. This must have been an extraordinary rich quartz, for my after experience told me how extremely difficult it is, even in burnt quartz, to detect the presence of gold. But after this specimen I was far more willing to give credit to the rumour that spoke of the German having taken out tons weight of the precious metal. Several other persons entered into the pursuit, but at first they seemed far from successful. Our own turn was soon to come, and we were to learn something of the uncertainties of all human pursuits, more particularly that of gold mining; and I, who had left England with the firm determination never to handle a shovel and pick, except to sell them, was to become for a short time the largest gold miner in Victoria; thus giving one more instance of the mutability of

all human resolutions. It was whilst musing over the probable result of quartz mining, that a friend who was in the Government employ, informed me that he knew of a quartz reef, about six miles from Bendigo, that contained gold; for a small quantity of the rock cropped out above the ground and gold could be plainly distinguished in it. The reef had not been discovered by himself, but by a surveyor, who had marked the spot, and being obliged to leave that part of the country, had revealed it to him. We soon came to terms; we were first to see the place, and if we could not agree about its value, we promised that we would never reveal its whereabouts, and act in all ways as if he had never told his secret to us. It was on a fine Sunday morning that he took me and my brother to examine the reef of quartz rock. We were armed with hammers, and a sack for any specimens of gold-bearing rock that we might be able to knock off. We examined the place carefully, and found upon

the top of the hill a narrow vein of quartz cropping a few inches out of the earth. Upon looking closely we saw gold standing out amidst the moss that was growing over the rock. This redoubled our eagerness; the hammers were brought into requisition, and by their assistance we broke off a good deal of the rock, and found it thickly studded with gold. In an hour's time we had found more specimens than we could carry in our sack, and had to conceal a large [quantity of them. We then covered the rock over as well as we could, so that should any one accidentally pass that way, they should not observe that it had been disturbed. There was one difficulty that stared us in the face; how were we to obtain possession of this ground? There were no mining laws at all applicable to real deep mining in the quartz rock, for all the regulations had been framed for the alluvial mining, which only gave to each man a small piece of ground, quite inadequate to support the expense of

working and putting up machinery for the purpose of quartz mining. We went to Mr. Pantton, the chief commissioner, and he warmly entered into our plans, evidently thinking that to encourage this description of mining was the best thing he could do for the district. He pointed out the difficulties we should have to contend with under the existing law, but at once gave us double claims as the discoverers, and promised to try and preserve a claim for every man we put on to work for us. But then, if the ground proved very rich these men might be tempted to turn round upon us, and say that they would henceforth seize the ground and work it for themselves, and it would be doubtful whether legally they might not be able to maintain their right to do so. Until the law was changed we had this always hanging over our heads; neither was it any imaginary fear, for in one instance an acquaintance of ours was served in that manner, and the law could give him no redress. Our

plans did not take much time ; we had an old tent ; a few tools were gathered together, and all was ready for a start on Monday morning. I did not go with the first party, but my brother took command, and with three or four picked men, he started away in a dray packed with the few necessities that we thought essential to our mining campaign. With an anxious heart I awaited news from him ; he was obliged to be very careful, for if it had got wind we might have been surrounded by hundreds of miners, taking up claims all around us. We were undecided ourselves whether the rock would really pay for working ; and did not want, till we were assured of this fact, to put on more men than was absolutely necessary, for each cost us five pounds a week. At the end of three days he came in poorly, but full of spirits, for the rock promised exceedingly well. The next morning I started to look after things, and at once fell to work. To my unaccustomed hands it was tremendously hard,

picking away upon rock was very trying, and driving in gads with heavy hammers was just a little different to quill driving; jumping a heavy bar up and down, to make a hole to insert a blast, was animating, but certainly (under a broiling sun, in the hottest month in the year, with the glass standing at 100 in the shade) rather exhausting, and had a decidedly thinning effect upon my frame, relieving me of every ounce of superfluous flesh. Exposed to the full glare of an Australian sun, with its rays reflected back from the white rock, and dressed in nothing but trowsers and flannel shirt, I often felt as if I should drop with fatigue; the perspiration poured off me, but still I persevered, knowing that if I flagged, the men who were working with me, but who were fine muscular fellows, accustomed to manual labour all their lives, would soon do the same. The excitement of occasionally seeing gold in the quartz we broke down kept me up, and as we now and then came upon particularly

rich looking pieces of rock, I worked with a vigour that perhaps five minutes before would have seemed to me impossible. Upon the first day my hands were severely blistered; the next they spattered the handle of my pick with blood, and on the end of the third day they ached to such an extent that by the time of ceasing work had arrived I felt that my powers of endurance had reached their limit. This quartz reef was in such a lone place, that with the exception of a party of miners who were working in a neighbouring gully, and who came to see what we could possibly be at, working in the rock, and creating such a noise with our blasting, we had no visitors. And when these came up, we concealed the best pieces of quartz, and worked in that part of the rock where we had hitherto not found any gold, so that after looking awhile they went away wondering how we could be such fools. But I knew pretty well that when our men went into the town on Sunday they would soon spread the news of

our discovery, and we determined to put on more men on Monday morning, so as far as we possibly could to occupy legally more ground. Hard work requires good eating and drinking, but ours was of the most indifferent description.

So great had been our excitement when we first reached the ground to commence working, that although the tent had been pitched, the sides had not been pegged down, and in consequence, every gust of wind lifted them up, threatening to bring the tent down about our heads. Neither had I time nor strength to look to it, after working all day, for I generally threw myself on my stretcher immediately I had finished, and slept for two or three hours; then it was too dark, and it was necessary to collect wood, light a fire, and cook something for supper. To obtain the materials was not one of the easiest of operations. In the hurry of first coming to the place, everything had been pitched down in the middle of the tent, forming a most heterogeneous heap, consisting

of meat, blasting powder, pepper, salt, flour, saws, rope, canvass, twine, gimlets, pannikins, billys, and all the little necessities of life; unfortunately the butter had been placed on the top, and the intense heat having melted it, the whole mass of things was covered with liquid grease, which solidifying at night, formed a thin sheet of unpleasant sticky mixture over every article in the heap. The meat had become fly-blown, and was unfit for human food, so that sardines and cakes made of flour and water, baked in the fryingpan, with bush tea, were generally the principal items of our meals. On Saturday we knocked off work, as is usual in the colony, at an early hour, and the men took themselves off to spend their wages in the town, and I was left all alone to enjoy a good sound sleep. On Sunday morning I ascended one of the neighbouring hills, and gazed down upon the scene of our operations. After fixing upon a nice seat, I tried to read a small New Testament that I had with me, but it was all

in vain, my thoughts would wander back to the strangeness of my position. The white tents below, and the quartz glistening in the sun, were constant reminders of the change that had come over my life. The state of my hands was enough to show me that I was not dreaming, but had actually been doing some hard work; they ached tremendously, proud flesh began to swell up on the lower part of the palm, and extended right through to the back of the hand; for three months afterwards they were useless, had to be cut in several places, and constantly poulticed; they were, what the miners call, badly jarred, and when such an accident occurs to a poor man, generally some one who has been unaccustomed to manual labour, he is obliged to trust to the kindness of his friends, for by the labour of his hands he can no longer earn his daily bread. The whole seemed to me so strange, that if it had not been for some amount of actual pain, I could even then have hardly

brought myself to the belief that the gold mine at my feet really belonged to me, and that I, who had made up my mind never to follow any mining pursuit, should have been placed, without any personal skill, in possession of a gold mine, that appeared so rich, while in the pursuit of something similar so many had spent their lives and fortunes without success. In the afternoon I was relieved by my brother, who not only brought out the party who had worked with us last week, but a few extra hands. Upon my return to Sandhurst, I found that my anticipations, that the men would talk about our discovery, were but too correct: but they had not revealed the exact position of the mine, and two or three persons, who hunted about in the right direction without success, spread the report that our men had purposely misled them, and the principal attention of parties trying to find us out was directed in an exactly opposite direction to the true one. To increase this idea was my great object, till we had sufficient men

on the ground to occupy as much as we thought was necessary. Therefore when two or three men were collected, and were ready to start, instead of telling the way to the mine, I took them, knowing that we were watched, in an exactly opposite road to the true one. Fortunately it was that I did so, for a man came and engaged himself, who was only a spy, to learn the true position of our new discovery, and just when I was going to plunge into the bush for the purpose of concealing my movements, this fellow stopped and said, "I am not accustomed to the bush, how shall I be able to find my way back?" "Oh," was my reply, "when you knock off work on Saturday next you will have plenty of companions." But my suspicions were aroused, and instead of turning round, I continued straight forward, wondering what would be best to be done. The fellow, however, relieved me from much anxiety, for hearing, from an answer to another query, that the mine was only two miles further on, he stayed behind,

and slunk off. No sooner did I find that he was clean gone, than, to the surprise of the men, I made a detour, and after two or three hours' walking arrived at my own place. The spy hastened back, with what he thought was certain information, and a party was soon equipped, who followed the course we had pursued till the spy had left us, they had no idea of tracking, and passing the point where I turned round, they held on for two or three miles in a straight line, then spreading themselves out, they made certain of finding us. In this way they spent two or three days, till they were completely bewildered, and it was four or five days before they could extricate themselves from the bush, having undergone a very fair chance of being starved to death. To keep our position a secret for any length of time we knew was impossible, and a friend, who had been employing several men in quartz mining, pressed upon us to take up what we wanted and he would be content to come next to us,

taking what ground we chose to leave. We acceded to this, and measured off one hundred and twenty yards, and then he measured off about a similar quantity. He had a good deal of experience in quartz mining, and he thought that his rock would turn out much richer than ours. I mention this to show how very uncertain gold mining is, for exactly where our one hundred and twenty yards ended, there, most strange to say, did the gold also cease, and whilst we were taking out eventually twenty ounces to the ton he could not obtain a single pennyweight. Neither did his ill luck end here, for he took all his men away from various mines in a place called New Chum, where he had spent much money without seeing the colour of gold. Some time after, when the places in New Chum were quite deserted, a man let himself down into one where a deal of work had been done, but, as I said before, gold had not rewarded the search. This man saw a piece of quartz, from which the surrounding slate-

rock had been removed, indeed all the work was finished except breaking this uncovered rock down. The man looked at it, and thought, to-morrow I will bring a hammer and knock down that lump, it was foolish having done so much not to finish it off. On the morrow he did return, and with two or three blows the rock fell, split asunder, displaying, to his astonishment, gold in abundance, running through the whole of the rock. He took possession of the mine, clearing from it a great deal of money. This put him in funds, and he employed men to work the other mines which had been deserted, meeting in all of them great success. Eventually, from being a poor man, he became in two or three years rich, and was enabled to erect some very valuable steam engines. The gentleman who first opened, and then deserted these mines, was obliged to leave Australia for the benefit of his health, and when he returned from England, he went to look at the place where he had spent so much money with so

little success. He was surprised at seeing the amount of work that had been done, and still more so, when the proprietor took him over the ground, and said, from that place which you deserted I took so many thousands, from that and that so much more, and the one I am now working promises better than any of them, and from all indications, will be a fortune or rather an inheritance for my children's children.

Our whole energies were soon completely absorbed by our gold mine; it seemed constantly to improve, and we occasionally broke down rock that perfectly glistened with gold. But how this precious metal was to be extracted from the hard rock, was a question that soon forced itself upon our attention. The wages were seventy-five pounds a week, and horse feed, which was then excessively dear, with incidentals, generally swept away another twenty-five pounds, and all our ready money was being rapidly absorbed. There was a good deal of excitement about our proceedings, and if we

had failed to employ the number of men, according to the regulation, which fixed the number of miners in proportion to the quantity of ground being worked, we might have had a portion of our mine seized. It was therefore of the utmost consequence that we should at once get some of the best of our rock crushed and the gold washed out. There was but one steam engine at work upon the gold field. It had been sent out from England by a small private company, and was attached to a Nasmyth's hammer, about one of the very worst contrivances to crush quartz with. The manager of the company had not thought proper to erect this machine, but when the excitement about gold quartz mining became very great, two of the residents on the Bendigo gold field entered into an arrangement to hire it for a certain number of years, they being at all the expense of carting and putting it up. The profits were reckoned at something enormous, and a clause, I believe, was entered in

the agreement providing what should be done with the profits should they ever reach a hundred thousand pounds per annum. This, however was but one sample of the gross ignorance that prevailed on the gold fields on all subjects connected with quartz mining. The charge for crushing a ton of rock was then eight pounds, (with proper machines it is now one pound) but even at that most exorbitant price the engine never paid its expenses.

Our necessities obliged us to have some quartz crushed, of course it was done most imperfectly, and the washing process had to be performed by ourselves. The gold came out so mingled with small pieces of quartz and iron stone, and was altogether of such a bad colour from having been improperly retorted, that no one would purchase. The manager of another company that was just formed, undertook to show us how it was to be melted. For this purpose the lump of gold, mingled with all the impurities that gave it such a bad colour,

was broken up and mixed with borax, put into a smelting pot, and placed on a blacksmith's fire. We all took our turn at the worthy vulcan's bellows, and watched the process of melting with a great deal of interest. After blowing for some time, it seemed to me that the contents of the pot had vanished, but I was assured by the scientific manager that the contents had merely melted, the gold sinking to the bottom. He then prepared a mould, and seized hold of the pot, intending to pour the gold out in the most knowing manner; alas for all human expectation, the tongs only brought out of the fire the top of the smelting pot; it had cracked, the bottom had come off, and allowed the whole of the gold to run into the fire. Despite my own annoyance, I could not help laughing heartily at the transfixed appearance of the scientific manager, as he stood with the top only of the pot suspended at arm's length upon his tongs. To recover our gold was the next thing to be done, and we had to put out

the fire and wash the whole of the cinders, and pretty tinkers we were by the time it was all finished; and whether we recovered the whole I know not; at any rate, when it was at last melted it was much less than what we expected, and very likely some portion of the gold had run into the chinks between the bricks. When we again commenced to melt, I suggested that most likely the bellows had heated one side of the pot too much, and as the one that was not exposed to the blast of the bellows was most likely just as much too cold as the other was too hot, the pot cracked, and to avoid a similar accident we should keep turning the pot round; this we did, and succeeded in casting our first bar of gold.

Our next misfortune was almost an extinguisher upon all our hopes. We had pressed forward with our works, and had raised a large quantity of quartz; indeed, so promising was everything, that we expended upon it the whole of our ready money, and just as we were going

to have some of the richest crushed, the machine upon which all our hopes depended blew up. We were never in such straits before—our money all gone, and a hundred pounds a week required, and if this sum could not be found, what appeared a fabulous fortune that our hands were ready to grasp would slide away into our own workmen's possession. True, we had rich quartz, worth thousands, lying on the ground, but what was that to us if we could not get it crushed; it was a most tantalizing position. My brother, who had a mechanical turn, erected two large wheels with rims covered with iron, which by the aid of two horses revolved upon a wrought iron grating; and we were enabled, by working all day and night, to crush about one ton and a half of quartz; and as the rock yielded us about twenty ounces to the ton, we were soon enabled not only to be sure of our men's wages, but to rapidly accumulate money, and to purchase a steam engine, selling our old wooden affair that had

cost us but a few months before two hundred and fifty pounds, for fifty. But before this occurred, Government had recognised the immense importance of the new interest, quartz mining; and had issued instructions to the different Commissioners on the gold fields to give leases to parties actually working in the rock, from fifty to two hundred and twenty yards, upon the payment of one pound for every yard leased. At the same time a new court was established on the gold fields, for the purpose of making laws to regulate all mining affairs. This court was to be chosen after the most curious democratic fashion. The candidate's name, with his proposer and seconder, had to be written on a piece of paper, then folded up and given to the chief warden. On the day of election he threw all these papers into a hat, gave it one good shake, put in his hand, and drawing out one of the papers, called upon the persons therein named to address the meeting in their several capacities. The warden then

first of all called upon those present, who were in favour of the candidate, to hold up their hands, then those on the other side, and the warden decided whether most hands were held up for or against. If he held that more hands were held for than against, he was to declare the candidate duly elected; and so on till five members were chosen, when the election was to close. Those who were deeply interested in quartz mining waited upon the chief warden, and pointed out to him that such an election was one of the most curious that could possibly be held; for supposing that there were twelve candidates, the first five that he took out of the hat might be elected, without giving the remaining seven a chance of being heard or put to the vote, and that some of these might be far more popular than those who had been elected, and that such a mode was simply absurd. The answer of the warden amounted to this, that he saw the absurdity but that his place was to carry out the law.

There had arisen a great deal of ill-feeling amongst the miners against those who were carrying on anything like large works, and this party had singled out my brother and myself for their especial dislike. Their argument was that they did not want capital, nor leases, but that each man was to do as heretofore—work the ground for his own benefit, and to be a servant to nobody—and that if the system just inaugurated was to succeed, capital and intelligence on the gold fields of Australia would have just the same power as they have in Europe, and the many would work for the benefit of the few. Several stump orators who wished to rise to importance, upon the excitement of the hour, goaded on the miners to elect members to this court who would sweep away leases, and give to everybody a right to twelve feet, and no more, of any unworked earth or quartz vein. Amongst those who were simply seeking their own importance in the excitement of the times, were one or two

who really had the general interest of the people at heart. The most distinguished of these was one who possessed of the idea that the earth was given to all men alike, thought on the gold fields his views could be carried out, and that all men should be equal; possessed of a considerable amount of eloquence, he was from his sincerity our most formidable opponent, and as the day of election drew near, he constantly harangued the miners to choose only such men as would sweep away all distinctions; and to *employ labour* for the purpose of mining was practically to be forbidden. The large quartz owners, who had expended much money upon their works, and who also knew that in the hard rock it would never pay for men to sink a shaft of fifty or sixty feet to work out only twelve feet of rock, also formed themselves into an association, and at the first meeting I was chosen secretary. Great exertions were made on both sides to bring their own men in; to reckon upon success for either

was almost impossible, and several efforts were made to reconcile the two committees, so that the new court might truly work out the purpose for which it was intended, and not be made a mere political debating club. On the day of election the quartz miners assembled in large numbers, and we thought our chance of putting one or two men into the court, who understood quartz mining, was tolerably fair; there must have been on the ground some thousands of miners. The warden received the various names, written on paper, folded each up, and tossed it into a hat; when they had all been given in, he gave the hat one final shake, popped in his hand, and drew out the first plum; the name drawn happened to be a man, who holding our views chose to go rather with the tide, and expressing in his address some popular views, he was elected almost unanimously. The next name drawn out was that of a man who had lately been a shoemaker, he was so overcome with modesty when called

upon to address the meeting, that his friends had to push him on. But when he did give utterance, he declared himself to be a poor man, and what was perhaps rather startling, opposed to all capital; he had come from England, where labourers were slaves, and capital had made them so; no, he was opposed to all leases, to all hiring of labour upon the gold fields, and only letting every man have as much land as he could work by his own individual labour.

The hands held up for and against this candidate seemed so nearly equal that the warden was fairly puzzled, and he ordered the two parties to divide, the one to go on the right, the other on the left, leaving a lane between. It was a most amusing time, the prominent men had to marshal their forces, and to try and persuade members on the other side to cross over to theirs, and if the persuaded one shewed any inclination to rat, inducements to the contrary came fast and thick, and if he still shewed any

inclination to move, gentle force to restrain was used; this was met by a little irruption from the opposition to the rescue, and it looked very much as if the election was to be decided by a few contests to drag different individuals from one side to the other. The warden however, seeing that what was going forward in fun would end in a downright fight, did not delay his decision, but pronounced against the shoemaker, consigning the would-be law-maker once more to his last, waxed thread, and leather. Our party considered this a great triumph, and many of them cheered so lustily that their throats became dry, and they were obliged to leave the field in order to moisten them, and and unfortunately for our interests they did not return. The next name drawn from the hat, was my brother's, and it was received with a tempest of hisses and cheers, at every effort to speak his voice was drowned, and if perchance he got out a few words, the cheers of our own party, of whom he was considered the

champion, again prevented a word being heard. This fun lasted so long, that the warden was obliged to interfere; and my brother was allowed to explain that mining had now arrived at such a point that machinery and capital were both necessary, and the old system for alluvial mining was not fitted for the more expensive and difficult mining in the quartz rock. His address had an effect upon those who had been opposed to him, for at its conclusion there was silence among the hissers, and for a moment I thought he would be elected. But the other party knew how to inflame their own side, and if there was one point upon which the miners were sensitive, it was that of leasing old worked out alluvial ground to a company; the feeling was foolish, but the miners feared that if the system of leasing *alluvial* ground was once introduced, the whole country side would be taken up by companies, and that the individual miner would have no ground left upon which he could work.

They therefore questioned him upon leasing quartz reefs, and then approached leasing alluvial lands. There was an immense deal of excitement shewn upon this point, but he was too straight-forward not to tell them frankly, that whenever land had been so mined that individuals could no longer work it, he would allow companies, after giving due notice, (and no one made any objection on the score that the ground could still be worked by individuals) to have the land upon lease for mining purposes. The uproar and the anger this proposition made was tremendous, and when silence could once more be obtained, he told them that if they would not let others work what they could not use themselves, they were just so many "dogs in the manger." The hands held up for him, however, were so numerous that I thought he had a chance of being elected, but the warden decided to the contrary. The next four candidates were elected without much opposition, leaving several names in the

hat, who had not been presented to the public; they justly complained, but so ended the first election that ever took place on the gold fields of Victoria. The mode was very justly ridiculed at the time, and since then the whole plan has been changed. This court did more harm than good; it discouraged all capital and companies, and did its best to encourage each man to work on his own account. This in the rock was a failure; miles of valuable reefs had to be deserted; even the alluvial miners became badly off, and when unsuccessful, there was no one to give them work. The court fell into disrepute, the feeling of the miners gradually changed, and they became as clamorous for capital, machinery, and companies, as they were once opposed to them. The principal portion of the heavy mining on the Bendigo is now carried on by companies, and many of those who once so fiercely opposed them, have become either their managers or their labourers.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR own success was for some time very great, the rock seemed to grow broader and even richer as we descended, and we had every hope of making a large fortune. The machinery we employed for crushing the quartz, is generally known as the Cornish Stampers, and is used in Cornwall for the purpose of breaking up the tin ore. Heavy squared blocks of wood, shod with iron, are made to rise and fall upon a solid iron plate, and this iron plate is covered in by a wooden box, having in front a fine wire grating; when the machine is set to work, the quartz rock (which however is generally previously burnt) is shovelled into this box, at

the same time a stream of water is introduced. The stampers rising and then falling upon the rock in the box, gradually break it up, and the quartz being mixed with the water that is poured in, is splashed against the wire grating in front of the box, and when fine enough escapes down a shoot into any other machine that may be used to wash the quartz, or in other words, separate the broken up rock from the gold. We used for this latter process, what was called Californian tables, and their principle was, I think, as perfect as any machine I have ever seen. They were made of wood, and consisted of a trough about four feet wide, the sides about eight inches high, the bottom gradually rising in four feet about three inches, when there is another compartment similar to the one just described; at the end of this first trough or table is another exactly similar. When used, about twenty or thirty pounds of quicksilver is put into the deep end of each compartment, and a sharp backward and for-

ward movement is given to each table, by means of an eccentric. The quartz, mingled with water, falls from the shoot of the crushing machine, into the deep concave portion of the Californian table, and by the backward and forward movement, the quicksilver rolls over and over the quartz and gold, and as the table becomes full, the light quartz is gradually carried along till it rolls over the first division of the table, leaving the gold which has been seized hold of by the quicksilver behind; the same process is repeated in the forward division of the table, and then the quartz falls over into the second table, where the process is again repeated. When all the quartz is crushed, the next proceeding is to clear out these tables, and to wash away, in a cradle, as much as possible of the quartz that still remains in them, and afterwards to pan off the residue, this last part requires a practised hand, for a great quantity of what the miners call mundic remains behind; it is small but heavy, and

there is some difficulty in clearing it away from the quicksilver; diamonds might very easily be hidden among it, and miners in pushing out of their pans whole handfuls of their detested mundic, may have thrown away valuable stones. At last the quicksilver is washed free of the earth, and is poured into a basin; the eager miner plunges his hand in to feel the gold, closes in it, and perhaps finds nothing; with an anxious face, his fingers then move quickly at the bottom of the basin, hoping that perchance he may feel a few pieces of gold. Often have I watched men's faces during this process, and seen them drop from a golden dream down to perfect despair. From the description of the quartz, I could generally form some idea of the yield, and if the gold was very fine, I could bid them not yet to despair, for their case was far from hopeless, for as their gold was very fine, it might exist in large quantities in the quicksilver, and yet they could not feel it with their hands. To prove this, the whole of the quick-

silver had to be squeezed through chamois leather, and whatever gold it contained was left in the leather; this is a tiring process for the wrists, and like everything else connected with gold mining, requires to be done with great care. Out, of a hundred and twenty pounds of quicksilver, in which the hand could not detect the presence of gold, I have obtained eighteen pounds weight of what is technically called amalgum, which is of course gold covered with quicksilver, in that instance it was so fine that it might have been spread like butter upon bread. In the retort, there were eight pounds of quicksilver recovered, leaving ten pounds weight of gold, being worth about four hundred and fifty pounds in money value. To prepare this retorted gold for sale, in the early days of quartz mining, when horse crushing machines were used, was of itself a very difficult operation. Small particles of quartz and iron-stone still adhered to the gold, and from the imperfect retorting, a deal of quicksilver

was still left behind. In those days, my plan was to take the gold as it came in large porous lumps from the retort, and putting it between my knees on the floor, proceed to break it up with a heavy carpenter's hammer. This was wasteful enough, for of course, in breaking up these lumps, much flew about that was never recovered, but gold was far more plentiful with me then than it has ever been since, besides what was to be done, it had to be broken up, the dirt blown out, and the gold washed, first in sulphuric acid, and then in hot soap and water. The last process was re-drying the gold, which was done in a fryingpan on the fire. The effect of the various processes on the gold was then unknown to us, and we thought that if quicksilver was not seen, it had all been retorted off, but this we afterwards learnt was a mistake; in the same way with the acids, a large quantity of which was absorbed by the cellular retorted gold; but of these things we were then ignorant. After a little time I

procured a furnace, and with practice, managed to melt a large quantity. The result was far from satisfactory, for in melting, the gold had lost twenty per cent. of its weight. I was perfectly astonished at the result, and made sure that it was owing to some mistake of mine in the manipulation; at any rate it was such an expensive experiment, to thus lose one fifth, that I very quickly determined to abandon at once the losing trade of smelter, and to continue selling to the bank, who were always so pleased with the appearance, colour, and large quantity that I took in every Monday, that they gave me sixpence an ounce more than anybody else. It never entered my head that the loss in melting was not owing to any wrong process of mine in the smelting, and the idea of it being caused by impurities in the gold, would have been held impossible, but yet it really was so; and once when I presented myself at the bank to sell my gold, instead of being received by the manager with his usual

pleasant smile, I was surprised to observe anything but an agreeable look upon his face. In answer to my queries, he informed me that they had that morning received some most extraordinary news from England, and he had strict orders on no account to purchase any more quartz gold, for the loss upon the melting had been enormous. He would never tell me what this amounted to, but as all the banks had been in the habit of purchasing quartz gold, which had lately much increased, and most of which was worse than mine, I could only come to the conclusion that the loss was very heavy indeed. From this time forward the banks would only purchase quartz gold melted, and upon assay; this gave them at first great profits, for it was found that the purest alluvial gold lost about two per cent. in melting, and when competition became strong, the banks had to allow this two per cent. to the seller. I have mentioned this circumstance just to show what great errors may be committed,

even in the simplest operations connected with gold mining, and that in these days it is no longer a rough and tumble sort of affair, where brute strength is the only requisite to ensure success. To carry on to any extent mining in the rock, requires a knowledge of the steam-engine, mechanics, and some little acquaintance with geology and chemistry, and indeed, the more general a man's information is, the greater chance has he of success in this, as in every other pursuit.

The men we employed were very different from the idea that is usually formed of this class in England. In a place like ours there were great temptations to dishonesty, but I had not a single instance brought under my notice, and as for any general emeute or row, such a thing I am sure never entered into their heads; beyond one or two men getting drunk occasionally on Sunday, we had no cause for complaint. They were from nearly all classes of life; one was closely connected with the

French nobility, another had been a squatter, and at one time had a large share in a station fifteen miles square, another had been a merchant, many were well connected, others were runaway sailors, and some had never risen above the rank of labourers ; but in this mixed assemblage we never had any difficulty in preserving order. However great had been the changes of fortune among some of them, it seemed to affect them but little ; the climate no doubt has much to do with this buoyancy of spirits, for if they were fallen to-day, they hoped to rise to-morrow. Careless they certainly were, and I could tell a hundred instances of this, but one will perhaps suffice. One day when I went into our overseer's tent, I found that he had asked some of the men to dine with him, and they were refreshing themselves with smoking and drinking. I was asked to come to an anchor, and partake of what was going forward. Whilst I was looking round for something to turn into a seat, a man came in, wanting some

more blasting powder, when I saw the overseer sit back, and lift off the lid of the cask upon which he was seated, and still smoking proceed to measure out a quantity of blasting powder. I was astounded, but he gave the final touch to my feelings, by quietly taking the pipe out of his mouth, and striking the stem against the top of the still open cask, knock the live ashes out; of course they all fell outside the cask, or I should not have lived to tell the tale. Looking round to see whether the men were not as equally thunderstruck as myself, I saw that each man was seated, smoking a short pipe, upon a fifty-pound cask of blasting powder, and by the marks on the sides of the casks, I saw it was their habit to strike them with their pipes, in order to cast the ashes out; if one grain of powder had been escaping, we should have been blown to pieces. I made a great row about this, and they grumbled at my particularity; they assured me they had used the casks for weeks, and nothing yet had

happened. But careless as the men were, we fortunately escaped without many serious accidents. Our worst misfortune in that way occurred to an acquaintance who wished to see the mine.

To those unaccustomed to such things, the entrance to our workings was by no means pleasant. The first twenty feet was by a ladder which rested upon a small ledge of rock; alighting here, a stranger saw nothing but a dark abyss, with no means of descending further; to do so, his attention had to be called to a rope fastened to the last round of the ladder, and he was told to seize it by both hands, and by its aid to descend. Upon first trusting to this support, he generally found himself swinging to and fro, unable to pay much attention to the shouting above, which desired him to steady the rope, and to feel with his toes for some little niches cut in the almost perpendicular wall, which would assist him to descend; after letting himself down in this manner about fifty

feet, he could hear the noise of the men working, and see their lights, but he was still seventy feet above them, and however picturesque the scene might be, it was generally little thought of by the stranger, who in darkness was swinging so far above, perhaps vainly seeking with his foot for the next toe point; his arms had most likely begun to ache, and he wondered how he could have been such a fool as to venture. The acquaintance who met with the serious accident had descended in perfect safety, and had ascended about twenty feet on his return, when the knot that tied the rope to the ladder gave way, and the unfortunate man fell head foremost upon the hard rock, fracturing his skull; eventually it killed him. We were all very much concerned; this rope had been used hundreds of times, and ever afterwards, however securely it was fastened, I felt unsafe; this too was much increased by our not being able to discover the cause of the knot giving way; it had been made by an old

sailor, had held fast for some time, and the only reason we could imagine was that the rain, which had fallen very heavily, had made the folds of the knot slippery, and that the swinging caused by the stranger had made it give way.

Another friend was very nearly being killed, fortunately we entertained great doubt as to the strength of his nerves, and despite his remonstrances we tied a rope round his waist, holding the end in our hands, paying it out as he descended. Well it was that we did so, for before he was half-way down he fainted, and we were apprized of the fact by a sudden jerk given to the rope by his falling body. We hauled him up perfectly insensible.

Besides similar machinery to ours of stampers and Californian tables, there were various others used to crush and wash the quartz rock. The most famous of these is the Chilian mill. It consists of a large iron pan, in which revolve two iron wheels; quicksilver is put into the

pan, and when the quartz is thrown in water is added, and the wheels crush the rock into the quicksilver, and the water carries off the crushed quartz as it rises in the pan. There was a machine very famous in England, called Berdans, it had been experimentalized very successfully in the old country, and a large number of them were sent out to Australia. It consists of a large iron pan, set at an angle, with two balls, one large and the other small, placed loose at the lower end of the machine; when used the pan is made to revolve, quicksilver is put in, and the balls grinding against each other, crush the quartz and force it into the quicksilver; water in the usual way is added, and the quartz as it rises to the surface is cast out, by reason of the revolving motion, through apertures made in the upper part of the pan. This method has been proved a most excellent one for obtaining the whole of the gold in the quartz rock, but I have only seen one used in Australia, and that was by a friend,

who spared neither time, money, nor anxiety, but for all that he failed to make it pay; the result however might be very different in a place where the wearing parts of the machine, such as the two balls, could be easily and cheaply replaced.

All the machines that I have mentioned require to be worked by steam engines. But it often happens in the remote districts that miners have no opportunity of getting their quartz crushed at any public steam mill, and that they have not the means of putting up any expensive machinery. In these circumstances they are obliged to extemporise something cheap, in which they can crush their best rock, reserving the common for better times. Sometimes they are obliged to crush their best specimens in a large iron mortar, but generally they require something that will do a larger quantity. To effect this a thick tree is first selected; a strong sapling about twenty feet long is then cut, and the thick end firmly

secured in a hole made in the tree about fifteen feet from the ground, and the sapling is supported in a horizontal position by a strong pole set in the ground about eight feet from the tree, and then to the thin end of the sapling is hung a log shod with iron; at about eighteen inches or two feet underneath this is a strong box with an iron grating; the quartz is placed on this, and the miner seizing the log by the handle, brings it down upon the quartz, striking it a heavy blow; the spring of the sapling brings the log up, and the miner repeats the operation. This is hard work, and a slow process, but in remote places it is often the best that a poor miner has for many months at his command.

Our own success in quartz mining was at first very great, our profits were enormous, and I thought that everything must yield to my good fortune. We kept two steam engines at work night and day, employing four engineers at seven pounds a week each; this may

seem heavy wages, but our common labourers were receiving from four to five pounds. To them the country should have been a perfect El Dorado, for with economy, out of four pounds a week, a man might save three; he pitched his own tent where he chose, having neither rent nor taxes to pay; wood and water were to be had for the fetching; meat, tea, coffee, and sugar, were cheaper in Australia than in England; bread, vegetables, milk, and farm produce generally were dearer, but then look at the advantages on the other side. They were not a saving race; few were better off at the end of six months' labour than at the commencement; they, like ourselves, thought that these good times must last for ever.

At great expense we had employed for some months small parties of two and three men to seek for new gold-bearing quartz reefs, but we had not been rewarded with even the colour of gold, much less with any rock that seemed at all likely to pay. But when we least expected

it, we thought all our exertions were to be crowned with success. We found a reef, very broad, and in some parts so rich that as we broke the rock down the fragments were held together by large lumps of gold. The news soon spread, and we had such crowds, particularly on Sunday, picking up the broken pieces of rock, and rebreaking them to discover gold, that we were obliged to put a watchman on the ground; for sometimes when the curiosity of the stone-breakers had been rewarded by finding the precious metal in our quartz, they forgot that it did not belong to them, and slipped the specimens into their pockets. The richest portion had been brought to our house, and we stowed it away in sacks. Some of this had been shown to various friends, and one morning a man called upon me, offering three thousand pounds for this newly discovered mine. I laughed at him, but he assured me it was not to be a bill transaction, but one for hard cash. Still I refused. He then offered

four thousand. I had not the slightest idea of selling, but he kept on at me, wasting a great deal of my precious time. The colder I was upon the matter, the warmer he grew, till his offer had mounted up to ten thousand pounds; it was very tempting, but I never had the slightest intention of selling, I made sure of a large fortune in my new mine, and therefore without a second thought firmly refused the offer. The would-be purchaser was very much annoyed, he assured me that he had reached his highest offer, and that it was beyond his means to go further; this could only be met with a smile, and the assurance that we had no intention to sell. He went away disappointed enough, but how he must have rejoiced at his escape, when he heard four days afterwards that the mine was a complete failure. Yes, so it was; what we had considered a quartz reef, penetrating far down into the earth, turned out mere surface rock, about thirty feet deep;

and instead of making a fortune we lost two or three hundred pounds.

There are a vast number of people who leave England with the firm determination not to have anything to do with gold mining. They have most likely heard of persons in the colony who with very fair prospects of making a fortune, in a few years of steady industry, have thrown it all away and madly rushed off to the gold fields, in the hope of making a large fortune in a few months. These untried, untempted emigrants, smile gently as they hear these stories, and say quietly to themselves, "Ah, it would take a great deal to make me commit such follies; give me but a chance of success, and see how carefully and consistently I will pursue it; and if by the strictest economy I can, in a few years, scrape together enough to return to dear Old England, how happily shall I spend, in the midst of old friends and associations, the last years of my life!" For the first few weeks after landing, these feelings not

only last, but grow stronger. Things are not exactly what they expected, expenses are heavy, the hope of making much progress seems to be small, and the emigrant feels that everything is so strange around him, that after the first excitement has gone off, he longs more than ever he thought possible for the land that gave him birth. But shortly these feelings die away, work does come to the diligent seeker, the elastic atmosphere raises his spirits, and although wanting many things that in England seemed necessary, he is gradually learning that they are not essential to his happiness. By-and-by he hears of one of his fellow-passengers having met with extraordinary success on the gold fields, and is about to return to England a wealthy man; he tries to close his ears to this, but it haunts him both sleeping and waking. He finds himself turning over the newspapers in search of mining intelligence, and every instance of success sinks deeply into his mind. These are the first symptoms of what is called

in the colony the "gold fever;" it is a complaint that, unless the proper remedy is used, never leaves the patient during his residence in the country; it is intermittent, and when anxious friends think the complaint cured, it breaks out when least expected with greater violence than ever. The only prescription that colonial doctors ever find do good is "My good fellow, throw away what you are now doing, for with your present restlessness you will never succeed at it, and go try your luck at the gold fields." Before this medicine is given the fever is generally risen to such a height, that the physic is swallowed most gratefully, and throwing behind him all his old resolutions, the new arrival starts, full of hope, for the gold fields, seeing not the footprints on the sand of time of many

"A forlorn and shipwrecked brother."

It may seem strange that any one should so much enjoy gold mining as to give up the comforts and luxuries of more civilized life, but yet it is so; the feeling of being one's own

master, to work just when it pleases, and to leave off when it suits, has a great attraction to those who have hitherto been always obliged to work at fixed hours; and to those of a different class, the wildness, uncertainty, and wandering life of a digger, with the chance, at any moment, of coming upon a fortune, has an irresistible attraction. I think it is in Washington Irving's "Captain Bonneville," where the gifted author, in describing the life of a trapper, says that "few who have once tasted its freedom ever willingly return to the restraints of town life," and that "men easily lapse into a state of barbarism, but with great difficulty emerge from it into civilized life." What Washington Irving said of the trapper is oftentimes true of the miner. I have known many men so enamoured of the life that they could not leave it. There was one instance of this that always seemed to me particularly curious. It was that of a man possessed of good fortune, who for years pursued mining as a

pleasure, wandering about from one field to another, present at every new rush, working with great industry, and having a large amount of strength; he was yet one of the unsuccessful; this never seemed to distress him, at every new place he commenced with fresh energy and hope, quite sure that at last Dame Fortune was about to turn the wheel in his favour. For many years he continued this sort of life, till he was almost unfit for anything else. Happily the discoveries in Central Africa fired his imagination, and he is now in that land of enterprise, where I trust his indomitable good humour, easy flow of spirits, and perseverance, will meet with a better reward than they did in the land of gold.

There is always a chance of some lucky find; every now and then the population is convulsed by the news of the discovery of some enormous nugget; in his brightest moments and happiest dreams, every digger believes that the day will come when such good fortune will be his own.

The great fever of the gold fields has now passed away, the mere brute strength that was once sufficient to dig from the earth its treasure of gold is now over, and mining in Australia is becoming more and more like similar pursuits in every other part of the world. At one time men possessed of sufficient muscular development, could almost make certain of a few hundred pounds in the course of three or four weeks, and as it was generally made by those who had been unaccustomed to the possession of money, they but too often squandered it away in the most foolish excesses, feeling pretty sure that when all their money was gone, a few weeks' work would again put them in funds. It is to these times that many of the alluvial diggers look back with the deepest feeling of regret, and whenever a new field is discovered, they hail it as perhaps the dawn of as bright a day as they once enjoyed. But those who thoroughly understand the gold fields know that there are now prizes within

the diggers' reach greater than those his most vivid imagination ever held up before his excited gaze. True he may no longer come upon a pocket of gold, or even turn up with his pick an immense nugget that nature with bountiful hand had cast into the ancient streams and rivers of this vast continent of Australia; but in the quartz rock the miner now sees that he has found the very treasure house itself, and each vein or reef of rock is to him a coffer in this vast store. The miner stands in the midst of these accumulations of a bygone age, collected at an epoch that knew not his race, and wonders in which of these great reefs, or chests, is laid up the gold that will give him power and enjoyment among mankind. Each receptacle of wealth is laid in due order on its shelf, it is doubtless labelled, but the miner knows not the character, and vainly for him is written upon every quartz vein, "full," "very full," or "empty." Sometimes he calls in the aid of science, and she with her dim spectacles often

pretends to read a language the very alphabet of which she is ignorant. And nothing really remains for the miner, but after looking round upon the great storehouse, to select in ignorance a chest that may be either full or empty, and with rude hands proceed to break it open. For months he may be engaged in this operation, and finding nothing, may from either weakness or want of funds, cease from his work before even the lid is raised. In that case all his labour is thrown away, and the deserted mine is open to any one who chooses to take possession, and work therein; for the ground work of the mining law is, that no one can hold a mine in which he does not keep up continual labour. Often these partly opened up reefs have been re-worked, and by perseverance have at last been thrown open, and disclosed a treasure that has not only enriched the owner, but the surrounding neighbourhood.

When a fortunate selection of a quartz reef is made, then indeed all the toil and anxiety

of months or years is amply repaid. In my perigrinations about the gold fields, I was one day led into a place called Sailor's Gully ; in it was erected a steam engine, with stampers, after the manner described in a former page. I knew something of the owners, and was invited into their tent, to partake of the everlasting nobler and to share their dinner ; to refuse these hospitable offers is at all times difficult on the gold fields, more particularly when made by men who have risen somewhat in the world. In this instance I was in a great hurry to move on, but I sat and chatted about the news that would most likely amuse my entertainers, till at last the conversation turned upon rich quartz, and we each of us gave our experiences. There was a smile of satisfaction on the men's faces that rather piqued me, as I related what I had seen in that way, for it struck me that my knowledge of quartz must be much greater than that of those with whom I was talking. During our discussion we had

been joined by some miners, who had listened to our conversation with a great deal of attention, and one of them turned to the owner of the mill, and said "come now, I don't mind showing this stranger what we are crushing at your mill, if he will but promise to keep it dark." Of course I promised, and we made our way towards the mill. They were not using quicksilver; the man put a shovel into the washing table, and drew it out, as I thought, full of dirt, but after moving the shovel about in a little water, and washing off the top crust, he drew it out full of gold. My eyes opened into something like saucers, as he went on to describe how often they had emptied these tables, in which it was evident they were crushing quartz of immense richness. I asked them from whence it came, at which they only chuckled, and said, "would I not like to know?" I walked round behind the machine, and they showed me the quartz they were crushing: it was about the blackest I had yet seen, neither

could I detect much gold, and what surprised me most was its extreme lightness; with all my experience, it was a rock, that if I had discovered, or it had been brought to me to crush, I should have been most pleasantly deceived, for it would have yielded ten times more than my most sanguine expectations. With much difficulty I purchased a small specimen which seemed tolerably rich with gold, and to this day I often look at it, wondering how such rock could yield such an enormous quantity of gold. I accompanied the men to their tents, and they asked me to lift a covered pail; one hand was not sufficient to do so, and before I could use the second, the man said "there now, don't hurt yourself," and uncovering the top, he shewed me that it was half-full of gold. He then pulled out two or three more similarly filled, and with a grin told me that they had plenty besides. The condition of these men must originally have been little above that of labourers, and no amount of steady industry

could give them the fortune that gold mining had done; certainly they had the good luck to select a coffer that was full, very full indeed, but can it be surprising that, when tidings such as these are borne on the air, many are infected with the gold fever. In this instance, however lowly the men's condition may have been, they were blessed with sufficient strength of mind not to be over elated, giving a fair promise of using the gift that was bestowed upon them with moderation and discretion. I have often seen men who seemed only fit to fill the lowest offices of life, raised in the course of a few years to wealth, and it was surprising how, with their change of circumstances, mingling with a higher class, and having obedience when they were once bound to obey, their characters, views and aims enlarged, fitting them to play their part with propriety in that state of life to which they were called. This once particularly struck me, at the meeting of a brother and sister, natives of Ireland. The

brother, many years resident in the colony, had raised himself to a position of wealth and influence, and looked in every way fitted to hold his own; the sister just landed, with a child on her back, looked and I have no doubt felt like a tramper whom most people would wish to avoid; and yet brother and sister had been parted but a few years, when they had felt and looked alike.

The occupation of a quartz miner is in many respects different to that of the alluvial digger; and this is not only so with their work, but their habits are in many respects opposite, for while the alluvial miner is a man of the most roving description, ready at any moment to throw his blankets across his back, and with a few pounds in his pocket, be off to a new rush, where he makes sure of finding the monster nugget that is always dangling before his eye; the quartz miner has often to settle down for many months to his work, before he can form the slightest idea of the value of the rock upon

which he is working, if it turns out well he engages workpeople, and very likely sees years of profitable employment before him. When this is the case, his old English habits come back, and he tries to gather around him some of the comforts of home. There was a German in Bendigo, who had been particularly fortunate in his quartz mining operations. He had fought under Blucher, and played his part in the battle of Waterloo, and was therefore a veteran; but age had not dimmed the light of his eye, nor taken much from the activity of his youth. His house was on the top of a hill, from whence he could overlook the whole of his workings. To approach nearer than ten yards to his house seemed impossible, for it was entirely surrounded by fierce dogs; they were cunning brutes too, for they would allow a stranger to come within their chains before they even growled, their desire to have a bite was so great that they could not restrain themselves further than to allow a man to come more

than a step within their bounds before they made their spring. After such a salutation, a stranger did not much care to approach nearer, but walked in a circle round the house, with every dog at the full length of his chain, howling furiously to spring at his throat. By looking closely at the arrangement, a narrow path could be seen, along which, if the stranger gathered up all the stray skirts of his garments, he might walk to the door, with these howling brutes of dogs just two inches from him on either side. When half-way along this defile, the worthy German would open the door, and assure the adventurer there was no danger if he only kept the middle of the path. The inside of the house presented a curious spectacle; there was first the old gentleman's bed, and within arm's reach were hung several loaded revolvers; on the other side was a gong, the slightest touch of which would call his miners around him,—specimens of quartz amalgum, models of crushing machines, quicksilver, cook-

ing utensils, occupied every cranny and corner of the room. By means of a little stove, the worthy gentleman or his son would in a trice toss up some little foreign dish, and then descending to the cellar, would bring up a few bottles of some deliciously cold foreign wine. The room beyond was the bed room of his son and wife, and with the freedom of continental people, they made this their best sitting room, keeping out of it all that belonged to either business or cooking, and reserving it for music and the purer enjoyments of life. They had a piano, and both father and son could accompany the wife on various musical instruments, and many a pleasant evening I have spent in this room, with music and dancing, in which latter the old man would still take his part. Then his anecdotes and remembrances of life were so full and vivid, and given with a manner and energy impossible to convey to paper. I have sat for hours, interested with

his stories; he would sometimes suit the action to the word, and seizing a pair of castinets, would spring into the middle of the room, and show how, when his regiment under Blucher was tired with a long march, he would go to the front and dance before them, and spur his fellow soldiers to march still further. Then he had been in California, penetrated deeply into the country, had many a conflict with the natives, and if his fervid imagination had not deceived him, had discovered a whole mountain of silver; it was only when away from the magic of his voice and manner that this seemed impossible, and more partaking of the language of Sinbad the Sailor than a true narrative, but why a mountain should not almost entirely consist of silver is more than my poor knowledge of geology can well say. His stories were not all tragical; he had suffered many ups and downs in life; and I have seen his audience laugh till the tears ran down their

cheeks, as he narrated his experience of landing with his son in the colony, with little money in their pockets, and still less English on their tongues; and how, after much consultation, father and son arrived at the conclusion, that the only conveyance their slender means could afford to travel to the Ovens Gold Field, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, was a wheelbarrow, and their comical adventures on the road, in their barrow, would make a more amusing tale than the world renowned story of the Tale of a Tub. A German house may be said perhaps to be an exception to what is seen among the English miners, and to a certain extent this is true, for national differences peep out more in home life than anywhere else; but there were many among the English quartz miners, who strove to surround themselves not only with the comforts and luxuries of life, but also with the intellectual food that English authors supply with so

bountiful a hand, and what was true in that day, must exist to a still greater extent now that these things can be obtained more easily and at less cost.

The process of washing the alluvial earth in the common puddling machines seemed to us such a very slow process, that we cast about for some plan by which it might be done on a large scale by steam. We invented a machine which consisted of a large iron cone, pierced at every inch with holes five-eighths of an inch in diameter, a number of knives being screwed on inside; the machine revolved upon its axis, the earth that was thrown in was quickly cut up by the knives, and was washed through the holes by water, which had to be used in large quantities; as the finely divided earth and water came through the holes, they fell into a sluice, where the gold was caught. The jealousy of the miners was then so great, of anything like steam power being applied to the

alluvial workings, that we thought it most prudent to erect this machine on the outskirts of the gold field. It was but an experiment, and, like most inventions, did not succeed with the inventors. We had been driven into a part of the gold field where the ground did not contain more than five grains of gold to the cart-load of earth. Some preliminary experiments had unfortunately been made upon some ground that yielded a far better return, and we were so anxious to perfect our own invention, that we had spent a great deal of money before the poverty of the ground was discovered. Our machine acted magnificently, it worked up the earth as fast as it could be thrown in, but alas the yield barely paid the working expences. We certainly had the rather barren satisfaction of introducing a new method, and of calling attention to the great improvements that could be made in washing out the gold from alluvial earth. Since then several machines have been

invented and patented for this purpose, and many of these are but slight modifications of the one we first introduced. We sold ours, and it was used for some time on a different part of the gold field.

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE in Australia is full of change, and those who hope to sit down, and by means of slow plodding industry to accumulate fortunes, generally cling to the large towns, and see little of the shifting character of an up-country existence. Just about the time that we had brought all our mining operations to a close, the old cry was raised, Bendigo is at last done for. A new gold field had been discovered at Mount Ararat, and the excitement it caused among the miners far exceeded anything that I, with all my experiences of new rushes, had ever witnessed. It was now conducted with a little more method than formerly. Instead of

each man or family purchasing a horse or dray, the general plan was to go to a conveyancing house, and agree for the carriage of the women, children and goods, in large American waggons. It was a picturesque sight, in the distance, to see one of these large parties travelling along on their adventurous pursuit. The waggon loaded with tents, blankets, shovels, picks, and perhaps a little household furniture, and in the midst, the careful face of a mother could now and then be seen, striving to place in some safe niche, a little struggling child, who, full of life and fun, would not be convinced that there was the slightest danger of falling. Then the men, in their blue and red shirts, as they marched along, the protectors of these weak ones, were worthy subjects for the pencil of any artist who loved what was rough and wild. The streets of the town grew gradually more and more deserted, and the news from the new field became if possible still more glowing, and when at the fever heat, some worthy started

express American waggon, to carry passengers but no goods, excepting swags, (i. e.) blankets and shovels; these were soon engaged, and as they passed through the township at the express rate of six miles an hour, cheering most lustily, the storekeepers sighed heavily as they saw their customers vanish in the distance. Thousands left,—a township sprung up at Mount Ararat like the work of enchantment, streets were laid out in the bush, a mile long, stores built up, and the new streets so filled with people that it took time to move along. All this was done perhaps in the course of ten or twelve days, but then it must be remembered that the stores were built not of brick, or of stone, but of canvass, and were erected by experienced hands, who were up to every shift and dodge of colonial life, and who were ready at a moment's notice, to transfer themselves and stock to any place, however distant, that would afford them a better market.

I was one day talking to an old friend about

this great rush, and its importance to the Bendigo district, from whence so large a body of miners had gone, when he proposed that we should go ourselves, and see if it were really a large field, and whether the reports of its richness were not very much exaggerated. Now I had never yet seen a new rush; I knew it must be a very queer place; but great as my desire was to see one, what possible advantage could be obtained, to compensate me for the risk and danger. We talked the matter over, and ultimately came to terms. My friend held an auctioneer's license, and he proposed that we should go into partnership as auctioneers, the necessary money for preliminary expenses should be found by me, and that the profits should be shared. Let me here give a slight description of the man with whom I joined in partnership; his characteristics are not uncommon in Australia. Born in Van Dieman's Land, and having transacted business in most of the colonies, he was possessed of an

enormous versatility, and this seemed to be the cause of his non-success in life. Before the gold fields were discovered, he had been in business at Adelaide, and like most of those in trade at that time, he had come to grief. Then he commenced mining, afterwards, was the first auctioneer, the first Government nominee to the council, the first banker, the first brewer, the first chairman and magistrate of the municipal council. He had the foresight to be the first to see the enormous profits that would be made by an auctioneer, banker, and brewer, and had the capability of turning himself into these and half a dozen other characters; but at the moment of success, his exertions slackened, and his efforts only served to point out to others the road to fortune. Amidst all the changes of his career, his spirits and good temper continued at the same easy flow.

We knew nothing of the route but from hear-say, and every one seemed to have gone

to and returned from Mount Ararat by a different track; the only point upon which they all agreed was that the Lodden must be crossed, and at this river we made our first experiment at fording, and both agreed that it was not a nice operation, for our things got wet, and we lost one of our bottles of brandy.

After two or three days' further travelling, we found ourselves on the pleasant banks of the Avoca, and our encampment that night was joined by two men who had been employing themselves in taking up passengers to the gold field; their cart had no covering, and although they turned it up on end, it afforded but a poor shelter against the rain that was pouring down. They were enthusiastic in favour of the new diggings; there was gold for every one, and in a short time the population would be doubled and trebled. They had made twenty pounds profit by the trip which had occupied them a little over a fortnight, and it seemed so little for two men who spoke of this place as having

so much gold, that I asked them why they did not remain and dig. "Oh, it was deep-sinking, and required more money than they had, but they would advise everybody to go." "Yes," I replied, "and be carried up, I suppose, by your worthy selves." Conversation is not very pleasantly carried on when you feel yourself very much like a drowned rat, and we retreated to our covered dray in the hope, wet as we were, of obtaining a few hours' rest, but this we found was quite impossible; the rain beat through our covering, and place ourselves in whatever position we liked, it seemed to have a determined intention of dripping into our eyes and mouths; so we boiled a little water, and mixing it with a small quantity of brandy, we sat up all night, telling stories and incidents of colonial life; when these became exhausted my partner told me the history of his life, and a more chequered career it would be difficult to imagine; this occupied us till morning, when we started once more. By noon we were on

the principal track to the new El Dorado, and the first figure we met was a well-known barrister, who finding practice grow slack at Bendigo, had put wig and gown in his pocket, and made the best of his way over to the new field. He was rather a tall man, and the pony he was riding being a particularly small one, his feet almost touched the ground. He was then making the best of his way home. We were well-known to each other, for he had daily pleaded before my partner as judge and myself as assessor, and making quite sure of now getting some real information, we adjourned into a canvass public house that was close to our place of meeting. My partner, in his red nightcap, with the starch pretty well washed out of him by last night's rain, did not present quite the dignified appearance that he had when he last sat on the bench, and the gentleman of the long robe had rather a draggled appearance, and looked very much like having slept for the last two or three nights under a gum tree; as

regards my own appearance, modesty forbids me to speak, and I certainly could not look much worse than the others. But the rain had left off, the sun was shining brightly, and we were as merry as grigs; the laugh and the chaff at our personal appearances were received with mutual good humour. To our enquiries about this wonderful Mount Ararat, we received but doubtful answers. The place was crammed with people, it was difficult to move in the best streets of this town of three weeks old, but as regards the gold, there was plenty going down by the escort, but he doubted whether much of it was dug out of the ground at Mount Ararat; it seemed rather as the gold brought from other places by the miners, as their little store, which they had been obliged to sell. It was deep-sinking, and it might turn out well—some of the holes had—but the district evidently could never support the large numbers that were flocking in; it was almost impossible to get a place of shelter; he

had been allowed to sleep on the bar of a public, as a great favour, by a Bendigonian whom he knew. The place did not seem legal like, and he had his wig and gown all tight and dry on his saddle. As for auctioneers, there were plenty of them, and he thought we should not succeed. Indeed a new place had just been discovered twenty-five miles from the Mount, called Pleasant Creek, to which numbers were flocking, why not set up our tent in that locality? We shook our heads, drank a parting nobler, and went on our way, not quite sure of the wisdom of our journey. As we jogged along at the rate of five miles an hour, we discoursed upon our chance of success as auctioneers, and the more we turned it over, the less chance did we see of much commission being lodged in our pockets. This view was further confirmed by three or four acquaintances that we fell in with during the day. Auctioneering was at a discount upon Mount Ararat, there were more in the business than could possibly

find employment. We were beginning to turn our thoughts to something else, so long as it was honest and profitable, little did we care, for we knew "that one man in his time plays many parts," and we were vainly thinking whether hair-cutting or banking would be the most profitable line, when I saw a man suddenly fall back in his cart, as he caught sight of us, and emerge from behind, holding a bottle and glass with one hand, while with the other he seized hold of my partner, and exclaimed "You are just the man I wanted ; oh, how delighted I am at seeing you." And here commenced such a wringing of hands, and such bumping noblers tossed down, of what seemed most excellent liquor, that I begged to be immediately introduced. "Ah, certainly ; Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones." And keeping my eye on the bottle, I repeated the customary phrase, "Very glad to see you, sir ; hope to make your better acquaintance." And taking the glass from my partner's hand, whose fin-

gers seemed to yield it rather reluctantly, I held it out for my share of the warm acquaintance, which I found was a very cleverly mixed cold punch. "Well, Mr. Jones, we are off on our way to Mount Ararat, where we are about to commence business as auctioneers." "Oh, my dear sirs, how glad I am that we have met. The mount is a take in, there is nothing to be done, all business is at a discount; but there is a new place just opened up, that promises wonderfully well, indeed it must become a great gold field; I mean Pleasant Creek; and there is not a single auctioneer in the place." "Very likely," was our cool reply, "but Mr. Jones has, we suppose, erected a little store or public on this most fortunate spot, and he is spreading all along the road news of the great richness of the locality where he has taken up his abode. Now, how much is humbug, and how much is true?" "Well, gold has been found, and that in paying quantities, but you know how difficult it is to get at the exact

truth; but whether or no there are heaps of people going, and for three or four weeks there must be a good business done. I am going to order up goods, and if you will take my advice you will turn your heads towards Pleasant Creek." After we had parted from this worthy, we came to the conclusion to take his advice.

A party consisting of a Russian, two Germans, and an Englishman, agreed to travel with us, and we got on so well, that by the evening of the fourth day we were enabled to encamp in a beautiful little dell in the Pyrenees. We had been in the habit of making up a good fire at night, but our new friends had much larger ideas on this subject than I ever had; they not only cut down trees, but cut them into short lengths, and at last made a blaze that could be seen for miles round. We had just sat down to our supper, when three men introduced themselves as miners from Mount Ararat. Their story was soon told; with a few pounds in their pockets, they had joined

the new rush ; had sunk three or four holes without seeing the colour of gold ; after their money was gone they lived upon the precarious charity of their acquaintance, and after a week's trial of this diet, they found it had such a thinning effect, that they strapped their shovels and blankets across their shoulders, and were now making their way to their old quarters, where they knew a little gold was to be found. They had walked forty miles that day without tasting anything stronger than water, and had lain themselves down to sleep when they saw our fire, and had made the best of their way over to us to say that they were hungry. A fryingpan full of mutton chops, and two or three pannikins of tea apiece, soon comforted their hearts, and they began to tell of the wonders of Mount Ararat, and how, if they had but a little more, they would have gone into deep-sinking, and made enough perhaps to settle in life, or as one (with a tear glistening in his eye) tremulously said, got sufficient

to return home to Old England. Finding their story just the same as I had heard a thousand times before, I withdrew from the circle of listeners, and making my way to the top of one of the surrounding hills, looked down to what in the distance was a most picturesque group, and if ever I paint the picture, it shall be called "The meeting of going and returning miners from a new rush." The light of the fire cast its ruddy glare upon the men's faces, and the countenances of the returning miners could be distinguished, as they told their narrative, peering into the now hopeful, now cast down faces of those who soon hoped to be in the midst of the exciting scenes to which they were listening.

Men who have travelled all day cannot listen all night, even to marvels in which their own hearts and interests are concerned, and one by one, with their feet to the fire, they laid themselves down. For my part a little solitude was so pleasant, not a sound was to be heard. We

were in a beautiful part of the country, and gradually the moon rose over the scene, glistening upon the recumbent forms, our camp, the white covered carts, and revealing the whole of the little dell, with the horses feeding in the distance. After the excitement of the last few days the contemplation of this little spot of beauty seemed like drinking in the calmness of nature, it refreshed my spirit, and raising me above the passing cares of the moment, gave me fresh strength for the stirring scenes that I knew must come on the morrow. Thus feeling, I fell asleep, and awoke still seated, to behold the same scene by the first rays of the morning sun. The camp was all alive, cleaning, cooking, feeding, and washing; it was no time to think how differently the same looked by moonlight and by sunlight, or how different are the thoughts of solitude to the everyday acts of reality, for I knew that I was wanted to take my share of the work, By starting early, and pushing on fast all that

day, which was Saturday, we hoped to reach Pleasant Creek at night; in this we succeeded, and just at sunset we entered this pleasantly named gold field. It appeared to me that I had never seen a place so disheartening as the one we were then entering; nothing was finished, hardly a store was up; people were cooking around the stumps in the streets; some sheep were being killed, and the warm flesh sold, under an awning stuck upon poles; all looked wretched and poor, some few canvass public houses had certainly been erected, but from them came sounds that required little experience to show that they were not put up for people to rest therein. My partner met with a friend who took him into his tent to sleep, and I found a half-finished store, into which I was allowed by the same kind individual to drive my horse and cart; then unharnessing, and taking every piece inside the cart, and carefully tethering the horse, so that he could hardly be stolen without my knowledge, I looked

well to my revolver, and laid down hungry, tired, and rather savage. Before midnight I was awakened by a tremendous row in a neighbouring public house; it was something more than a mere drunken squabble. It appeared that a thief was detected robbing a man who had lain down to sleep. The uproar was so great that I sat up to listen, and suddenly the whole party turned out into the street; there was a violent altercation as to what was to be done with the robber; then came a rush from some of his comrades to rescue him, and a cry from the other side soon brought some hundreds of miners to the assistance of the captors. It was difficult in the darkness to know friend from foe, as the mass of men struggled to and fro. At last, to my dismay, I heard the click of pistol locks, and not wishing to make myself a receptacle for any stray shots, I laid myself as flat in the bottom of the dray as I possibly could stretch, and with my revolver in hand, kept one eye fixed on my horse,

having made up my mind that if anybody should accidentally make a mistake in the ownership, they should be reminded of their error by a bullet. The disturbance was over sooner even than I expected, for the thieves making a rush, managed in the darkness to rescue their comrade, and thinking that most likely some of the same fraternity might pay me a visit, I for the first time in my life managed to sleep with a loaded revolver all ready cocked in my hand; this seemed quite a feat at the time, but a little practice soon enabled me to do it quite comfortably. When I awoke it was Sunday morning, and I had pleasant visions of a nice wash, clean shirt, and comfortable breakfast. But how were these things to be had? My partner was already up, and we began to look around, mutually agreeing that a wash was "the thing." Pleasant Creek sounded in our ears so refreshing, but we had not yet seen it, and upon making inquiries we found that it resembled the dead

donkey that nobody had ever seen. But how did they get water? Carts came from a place some miles off, where there was some, and sold it at a shilling a bucket. Ah, that was a new light; and is it good water? Well, it used to be, before the miners took to washing their earth down there, but now it is rather thick. And in two hours' time a cart did come round, and sold us a shilling's worth of water and clay. Some people I know affirm that clay mixed with water gives it a sweet taste, but for my own part in washing I object to a yellow strata being left behind on my skin, and when I have made tea I can always sweeten it to my liking without the clay, which has the disadvantage of requiring to be strained through the teeth. After a very doubtful wash, we procured some chops, and cooking them at a deserted fire made against a stump in the street, we finished our breakfast with about the thickest tea that I had ever yet drank. When this performance was over we took a turn round the

place, to see what was doing. Although Sunday, work was being performed in all quarters; stores were being built, and the miners were working hard, the hammer and the pick resounded on every side; this was quite new to me, for on the older gold fields such a thing would not be tolerated for a moment, and in this instance it was perhaps almost a work of necessity, and was given up after the first two or three Sundays. The most promising feature we saw was the number of people coming in, we counted five hundred new arrivals during this our first day. On the Monday morning we made acquaintance with the principal people of the place; these had three days before measured out a new street, and the land had already become valuable; by strict law no man had a right to more land than he actually used, but at a new rush there are bye-laws that no one can with impunity break; and one of these at Pleasant Creek was that the layers out of the street should divide it among them, and

sell what they did not want to those who came afterwards. Of course they had no right to the land, and if Government ever decided upon selling it would have to be bought over again. Not seeing any immediate chance within a week or two of this street being filled up, so that we might lay out one for ourselves, we submitted to the bye-law, and paid thirty pounds for the privilege of putting up a little office, with enough land to make a horse-run; this was in the best part of the street, for even so young a one as this of three days old has its best and worst part. A few pairs of sawyers had established themselves in the neighbourhood, who were asking fabulous prices for hard wood. Former practice had made me familiar with the palm and needle, and whilst I stitched away at some calico, a carpenter at thirty shillings a day kindly put up the frame-work of our little place; in four days it was erected, and having all ready, I soon managed to draw tightly round the sides, the calico I had already

stitched together, the roof being made of the same materials; the floor was far from being level, but a few cartloads of earth from one of the holes soon set this right; unfortunately it was carted in while I was away, and was thoroughly wet. Barring this slight defect of the ground being sopping, and the calico roof being so thin that it let the water in like a sieve, it was a very comfortable place. When we had grown fastidious over our comforts, we used to turn the beds whenever the rain came in very heavily.

After a time we made our place into two rooms, by hanging a sheet of green baize across the middle, dividing off our sleeping room from the office, which also came to be dignified with a table covered with a remnant of the same green baize. One side of our little place was against a public house, and as they afterwards built half-way across the end of our establishment, we were secure from any sudden attack upon nearly one half of our

little building. My partner had not allowed the grass to grow under his feet; he had drawn from some mysterious receptacle a pair of top boots, the red nightcap had given way to a most thorough wide-awake, and with whip in hand he perambulated about, a walking advertisement of the knowing auctioneer. Every vestige of the comfortable brewer, the weighty banker, or the solemn judge—the three last characters in which he had appeared upon the stage of life—had vanished, and he looked the shrewd horse dealer he was then acting, to the very inch. Our prospects of doing business began to look well; we were certainly the first auctioneers on the ground, and were at least a week ahead of any one who should start against us. We had no fat estates to sell, neither had we a chance of any one coming to us to offer a gallery of pictures, for which the worthy owner wanted the money, and at the same time found his mansion was too small. No, none of these things, or of a like nature, did

we ever hope would fall under our hammer, but we trusted to a noble quadruped to bear us far away into the realms of fortune. How could we do better than trust to man's greatest friend, the horse. Our recompense for performing the transfer from one owner to another was but twenty per cent upon the value, it was a per centage easily calculated, and we divided the burden equally between the seller and the buyer. The first paid ten per cent for our trouble in selling, and the latter paid the same amount to insure to him the value of the horse back again, should it ever be claimed as one stolen.

We became known as the first people in the town; the Squatters came in, and we managed to sell a few of their sheep to the hungry miners. My first exploit in this way was rather amusing. A neighbouring Squatter had brought us in a small flock of sheep for sale, which he assured me were all eighty pounds weight; oddly enough I believed him, and

expatiated at great length to a butcher upon their size and weight. I had armed myself with a shepherd's crook, and offering this to to the man, I said "There now, catch one of them and feel how fat he is." "No," said the man, "you try." After offering the crook two or three times to each other, I obtained a glimmer of the real state of the case, the man knew as little about butchering as I did about auctioneering, and neither of us could handle the crook. Thinking this was rather too absurd, and being determined if possible to hide my own ignorance, I made a desperate rush at the hind legs of the sheep, and to my own astonishment, hooked one and threw him upon the ground, and proceeded to go through with the manipulation that I had seen my partner practise. The butcher was so struck with either my cleverness or eloquence that he purchased the whole lot. He reproached me afterwards with having deceived him, and made me look at the dead animals hanging up in his shop,

which certainly instead of being fat enough for human food, were so thin that they might have served for lanterns. I was sincerely sorry for the poor man, but my character would have been lost if I had confessed the fact that I had been successfully humbugged. Two or three weeks made us feel satisfied with our position. The rush was at its height, we had built a stable of canvass to accommodate our own horses, and we found that we could generally fill it with those of strangers, come either to settle or see the place, at thirty shillings a night for each.

We had for some time given up cooking our meals at a fire lit against a stump in the street, for a restaurant had been established, and for two guineas a week we fared sumptuously three times a day upon dishes concocted by a Chinese cook. No position in life is free from care, and with all these increasing luxuries we knew that our lives were rather uncertain. The population had greatly increased since we came, but

we calculated that at least one third must have left their country for their country's good. Upon the whole I have never seen a place where, for the first three or four weeks after our arrival, a man's throat stood in such jeopardy as in Pleasant Creek. It must be remembered that there were about fifteen thousand people, and that there was neither magistrate, police, priest, chapel, church, post office, nor any authority whatever. The nearest to any of these things was Mount Ararat, and that was thirty miles off. It was, under these circumstances, rather trying to find that a rumour had gone forth that we were making money fast; our name for wealth, we knew, might cost us our lives, and we would willingly have dispensed with the character, but the more we protested our poverty the greater became the conviction that we were rich. We were obliged to exercise the greatest caution, and our alarm was considerably increased by the very unpleasant discovery that our place

was watched. It exasperated me not a little, and one day giving way to my annoyance, I very nearly precipitated the result we so much feared. My partner was outside, standing upon a cart, selling away as usual, and I was very busy inside our little office, receiving the money, giving receipts, &c., when a man entered, pretending to be drunk. He tumbled up against me, I pushed him off; he did it again, my temper was up, and at the third pretended stumble I seized him by the throat, and cast him forth into the street. Immediately it was done, I saw my imprudence; the fellow gathered himself up, he was surrounded by his associates, and I made sure the place would be pulled down and plundered before five minutes had passed over my head. I crushed all the notes into my pocket, and going behind the baize curtain, I procured my revolver from underneath my pillow. It was all ready for use, and cocking it, I proceeded into the office, determined to shoot the first man that

laid his hands upon our property. All his drunkenness gone, the fellow, backed by his comrades, had advanced towards the door, with the evident intention to do mischief, when two of my friends quietly lounged up; one was a herculean Scotchman, the other a little broad-set American of great strength. Two better men for a row my heart could not have desired. Backed by his party however, the man blusteringly approached; my two friends leaning carelessly against the door posts eyed him steadily, he looked inside and saw me holding down the receipt I was making out with a cocked revolver; his courage faltered, and himself and party slunk away.

There are inconveniences, amounting almost to annoyances, in a calico office; for in the first place, its walls do not afford much chance of resistance to any one who is feloniously inclined; but besides this, at night-time, when there is a light inside, the shadows of the occupants are thrown upon the tightly stretched calico, and

the whole becomes a puppet-show for the edification of strangers outside. Now it is not pleasant to have all one's little movements displayed in this manner to admiring passers by ; if it only afforded them amusement, it might be forgiven, but when a band of men have determined to rob a place, this pictorial description on the walls of what is going on inside, gives them a complete knowledge of the domestic arrangements. Added to this, when our lights were extinguished, they had only to hold up a light outside the office, for those at the other end to see right through. This became an intolerable nuisance to my worthy partner ; he could not get a wink of sleep, for after having passed safely through the toils of the day, he still felt he was watched all the evening. He would at last put out the lights, and, with a sigh of relief, gather his blankets around him ; but no sooner had he closed his eyes for their first wink of sleep, than he found a strong light cast upon his face through the thin calico, by means of a

lamp outside, and then it was carried round to the other end, and that was looked through after the same manner. At first my partner did not understand the meaning of the dodge, and bore the infliction with his usual equanimity; but suddenly it burst upon him, and he exclaimed, "Why the scoundrels, by holding a light at one end, enable a comrade, stationed at the other, to see right through the place; we shall as sure as fate be robbed and murdered." From this time forth he could not sleep, and if by chance he had a few fleeting winks, he woke up suddenly, feeling a murderous grasp upon his throat. He kept his double-barrelled gun at full cock by his side, and insisted that I should do the same with my revolver. Every night he awoke me, and sure enough the fellows always came with their light, to see if we were prepared; upon these occasions my partner would shout out, "Here they are again; is your revolver all right?" The dear man grew quite thin and haggard,

from want of rest, and anxiety of mind; he wondered how I could possibly sleep, but as I told him, what was the use of both keeping awake. That his fears were not chimerical, may be judged from the fact, that the store next to ours was robbed twice, the one opposite three times, and a man was shot attempting to enter another twenty yards off, and a jury of enlightened citizens convoked by the slayer, returned a verdict of justifiable homicide. My partner could not bear this state of things, and for some nights took himself off to an hotel about four miles distant from the diggings, where he enjoyed a few hours' good sleep. I took every care to spread the report that he had all the money with him, and always refused to pay till he returned; this was a little manoeuvre of mine, for he would never take charge of more than a few shillings, and it answered extremely well, for with my partner, vanished the examining lights at night. But for all that, I took every possible precaution;

never left the office at night; and always arranged my fire-arms so that, without their being seen, I could in a moment have them in my hand. Knowing this everlasting watching, I would undress in the most careless manner, avoiding however any over acting, threw my clothes carelessly about, put out the light, and jump into bed. Ten minutes afterwards, I would steal out in the dark, obtain my trousers, put them under me in my bed, get my revolver, and underneath the blankets (to muffle the sound) bring it to full cock, it was always loaded and capped, and thus with my revolver in hand, all ready for an instant shot, could fall comfortably asleep. How necessary these precautions were, after events proved. I felt that the right of possession to my money was a game of skill, between myself and the thieves, in which I held all the stakes. The only balancing power was the revolver, and from the experience of my own mind, I can say that when the pistol is made the sole arbiter in such

a game of skill, it produces a fierceness, and a disregard of human life, that those who have always lived in security can hardly understand, and which I can now look back upon with shame and dread. My partner at last returned, on my informing him that it was generally understood that he took charge of all the money when he left at night, that I had increased this idea by never paying till he came back in the morning, and that my great fear was that he would be shot on the road for the money he was supposed to carry with him. He thought this too bad, but he ever afterwards slept at home. With him came the searching lights at night, and he declared that unless some change was made, it would not be safe for us to remain; this was also my own opinion, for the robberies had increased to an alarming extent. So we agreed to get some one to sleep in the place with us, and the next morning we saw just the man wanted. He was an American, short and stout, of tremendous strength,

had been a quartz miner, and known to be as true as steel. Upon my asking him where he slept, he said, "I have been sleeping in a friend's tent, but he is going to-day and I hardly know where to get, for the place is growing dangerous." We eagerly asked him to come and sleep under our roof tree. Yes, he would be quite willing to do that, but our ground was so awfully wet, and he did not like every night to lie down on thoroughly damp ground. This was rather a poser, but he relieved me from my difficulty by saying that a friend of his had a large stretcher, and if we would not object they would both sleep in our place. Could we trust him? Most certainly, and they were both armed. That very day they brought in the large stretcher, and we now looked upon our place as being a sort of Bank of England for strength. They all went out that evening to join in the amusements of the place, and returned home late at night. Chatting over the fun of the evening, they quite overlooked

that every movement might be watched by eager eyes. The head of their stretcher was close to the end of the office. As the men undressed, of course every movement was displayed on the calico, and they did what was the most imprudent thing they possibly could do, by putting their money into their clothes and then carefully placing them as a pillow beneath their heads. Just at daybreak I was awakened by a shout, and jumping up in bed, was just in time to see the stout American rush past me, and with a bang spring through our canvas door. The first impulse of us all was firmly to grasp our fire-arms, and then to ask, "What is the matter?" We soon saw that a slit had been cut in the calico, just at the head of the stretcher where the strangers had slept, and we supposed that somebody had commenced cutting into our place, when the watchful American was awakened. Our curiosity was soon allayed by seeing him return; he was very fat, and had gone to bed in the very light costume

of a small flannel waistcoat; he was almost breathless from his chase, but he managed to explain that feeling a draught of cold air at his head, he had awoke, with the full conviction that some one was cutting into the place, but in the position that he was lying, he could not see the man, nor grasp his hand; he slightly turned so that he might have both these advantages, being determined to drag the thief through the hole he was cutting, into the midst of the room. On turning over he had slightly disturbed his mate, who grunted out something. This frightened the thief, and the American saw (by the shadow cast in the tent, made by the first rays of the sun) that the scoundrel was creeping off, when he immediately made his exit through the door, as we had seen, in pursuit. At this moment his friend exclaimed, "why the scoundrel has taken my money out of my trousers." The American instantly made a rush for his coat, that had been under his head, and found that some money his wife had

sent him only the day before was also gone. He was still almost breathless from his run, and his feelings, on the discovery of his loss, were so overpowering, that quite forgetting the lightness of his costume, he danced about like a madman. He presented such an irresistably comical appearance in his short flannel shirt, that despite our sorrow at his loss, we could not prevent bursting into roars of laughter. Upon examination, we found that the robber had knelt down outside our place, and first making a hole in the calico, had then with a sharp instrument cut out of the men's clothes, that were under their heads, the purse and pocket book that he had made his booty. The fellow must have watched outside, and seen the carefulness with which they had placed their clothes for pillows, but considering that he must also have known that we were all armed, and would have felt it both a duty and a pleasure to have shot him, it was about as bold a robbery as can well be imagined.

The district seemed completely forgotten by the Government, the thieves were a regularly organized body, and if one of their number was captured, the rest by a sudden onslaught rescued him. Daily, hourly, annoyance and risk of this nature, produces an exasperation that can only be understood by those who have been placed in similar circumstances. No community will submit to it long, without taking steps to relieve itself of the fearful annoyance. It was continually proposed to us that we should consent to a Vigilance Committee, of which we should be the heads, but we naturally shrank from the dreadful responsibility. Judge Lynch was a terrible name, he had never yet put on the black cap in Australia, and we felt that the Government would be so injured by his inauguration, that they would ignore their own neglect of the district, and perhaps raise a clamour against those who should be the first to introduce him, that would enable them to bring the heads of the movement

within the fatal noose. That we should have the support of the real miners, we knew right well, but then they are a migrating set, and the men who cheered us on to-day, might be hundreds of miles off at our greatest strait.

We kept on reporting to Melbourne the state of affairs, but they took no heed of our remonstrances; till at last Judge Lynch arose and frightened them into action. A miner was returning to his home, or rather his tent, when he saw that although it had been taken down, it was not gone, a man being busily employed in binding it together for easy portorage. Subduing his feelings, he entered into conversation with the thief, and saw the whole of his little property quietly packed up. The robber little knew that the owner was standing by his side till he received a blow which felled him to the earth. Many tents had been lately stolen in the same way, and it was a serious thing for the hard working miner to return at night, wet and weary, to find himself a homeless wanderer.

A great number of these men quickly assembled upon the scene, and the more they talked the matter over, the greater was their anger. In large assemblages the most violent always lead. In an hour's time nearly two thousand of them had collected, determined that the fellow should not, like many others, be rescued. How was he to be dealt with? Each proposal was of a severer nature than the last, till some one cried "Let us lynch the scoundrel." "Hurrah!" cried a hundred voices, "let us hang him; an example must be made, or our lives will never be safe." The hoarse roar of exultation with which the proposal was received must have struck terror into the heart of the culprit. There was no difficulty in procuring a suitable rope, and it was thrown over a tree amidst wild shouts of "Lynch him! lynch him!" Now it may perhaps be thought that Americans, particularly Californians, would have been foremost in carrying out the dictates of popular passion, legalized as they had

seen it done in their own country. But this was far from being the case, for as many of them informed me afterwards, Judge Lynch was only a dire necessity to be used when the ordinary tribunals were corrupt, that this was not so in Australia, but it was necessary to give the Government a lesson, that unless they moved quickly, and sent some constituted authority, excesses were commencing that would bring disgrace upon the land. But to do this they did not think it necessary to shed this man's blood, and they threw themselves into the affair with the determination to stay the execution. The same thought and feeling actuated them nearly all, and that too without any previous consultation; but what were these voices among so many? they seemed to be drowned in the general clamour, till one who saw that if the man's life was to be saved the only chance of doing so was by giving a comical turn to the revengeful feelings of the multitude, shouted out, "Don't lynch him yet;

shave his head, and show him round the diggings." The cry was caught up by those around the Californian, "Shave him! shave him! and show him round." It tickled the people, their humour suddenly changed, and amidst roars of laughter it was unanimously agreed, first of all to shave his head, then to show him round the place. He was rushed into a barber's shop, and the wool that grew on the top of his head was almost torn off; he was then carried round in triumph to every public house, and placed on the bar, in full sight of the assembled concourse, a stalwart miner seized him by the nape of his neck, and held him up to view. For some time they carried him about like this, he was more dead than alive, for it was something like a cat worrying a mouse, and he was dragged and knocked about after a fashion that would have killed many men. It was still doubtful what would be done with the fellow; the comical idea had gradually given way to the more ferocious

feelings, and as the people grew tired of laughing at his peculiar aspect, they resorted to the last and final dance upon nothing. Several ominous voices had been raised to know when he was to be put out of his misery, when the ever ready Americans suggested that he should be taken into one of the long dancing saloons and well kicked out of the diggings. This was highly applauded, for many could then join in the punishment. A long row of fellows was formed, the thief was told to run, and every foot, armed with a heavy boot, sent him forward on his journey; this was found to be such good fun, that he was again caught, and taken to another dancing saloon, where the same game was played upon his unfortunate body, and when he became too exhausted to play his part in this game of foot ball, he was kicked out of the diggings. Poor wretch! he must have been punished frightfully, and yet he survived, for I heard that he was seen some weeks afterwards in charge of a number of

stolen horses, among the Grampians. The miners declared that the next robber caught in the act should be hung.

Men who work hard must have some amusement, and for those who did not care for bagatelle, billiards, or drinking, there was nothing left but the dancing saloons, and these met with an extraordinary amount of success. It was a strange sight to see some forty or fifty couples of men, in their muddy clothes and heavy boots, solemnly dancing the Mazurka, which at that time was a great favourite. But there was one saloon which, in addition to a capital brass band, owned three German girls, almost the only women in the place, and that too where fifteen thousand men were assembled, and it was considered the highest possible honour to get a dance with one of these fair damsels.

At last when the patience of the miners had been taxed to the utmost, Government appointed the Honourable Mr. Murray as commissioner for Pleasant Creek; he soon made

nis appearance, and three or four troopers were detached from Mount Ararat to carry out his behests. It may seem strange that so small a force should be enabled to at once hold in check the large bodies of organized thieves that infested the neighbourhood, but so it was, for the robbers never for a moment tried to dispute the ascendancy over them. They knew that the well disposed had now the visible power of law on their side, and would if necessary act with vigour under the properly constituted authority. There was no Court House built, and the Commissioner made use of our little tent to hold his first magisterial sittings, and my worthy partner assisted him with his advice. It was not long before a thief was caught in the very act of knocking a man down and easing him of his little superfluities; there could not be much doubt about the fellow's guilt, but to strike terror into evil doers it was determined to hold our first sittings in as formal a manner as possible. We had built a table,

which, covered with green baize, had a most official appearance. But what was to be done for seats? Alas, we had no chairs, neither was there such a thing in the whole community, and yet it was necessary that the representative of Majesty should be seated. So for a seat we turned on end a five gallon cask, and when the Commissioner sat down, he arranged the skirts of his coat to fall gracefully over the sides so as to cover the undignified character of his throne. By the side of the table we placed an old box, and fortunately finding a piece of red cloth, we used it as a cover, thus making a very official looking bench for my partner, who was now willing to act the magistrate. When all was finished we gazed upon our preparations with a great deal of pleasure. I was to swear the witnesses; but where was the Bible? The commissioner had forgotten his; I had not mine with me. Surely in a population of nearly fifteen thousand English people there could be no difficulty in procuring

a Bible! So thought the commissioner, but my ideas were of a rather contrary nature, and I was fain to acknowledge that during the time I had been in Pleasant Creek, neither Bible, Testament, nor Prayer Book, had I beheld. He stared a little and thought it strange. To try the prisoner, the witnesses must be sworn, and although the law may be occasionally slightly stretched, the commissioner could not keep the man long in prison without a hearing, and he begged of me to try and borrow a Bible. If he had asked me to borrow anything else I should have had less reluctance to accede to his wishes. Still I felt it was better that I should be jeered and sneered at than the commissioner, so I summoned up all my moral courage, and went forth upon what I could not help feeling was a wild goose chase. There were many places I could not enter even to ask, for I should merely have received the foulest ribaldry and imprecations upon all that is most holy; and at first I felt great difficulty in entering

any store with what I knew would be considered a most extraordinary request. Have you a Bible to lend? At first there was always a laugh, but upon pressing the question there was generally a certain amount of shamefacedness, and the assurance that a Bible was not to be found in these diggings. After having been laughed and joked at for nearly two hours, during which I continued my search, I was almost inclined to return and tell the commissioner that he was wrong and I was right, for in the whole population there was not a Bible to be found, when I bethought myself of a particularly steady, quiet Scotchman, and it came into my head that he was a very likely man to have what I wanted. His store was not far off, and upon questioning him, instead of a laugh there came a serious look over the man's face, and I at once jumped to the conclusion that he had the desired book; neither was my conjecture wrong, but before he answered he cross-questioned, as to what I wanted

with a Bible. Upon telling him it was to further the ends of justice, for we had not one to swear the witnesses upon, he went to a sack of corn and drew out his treasure, neither would he part with it till I had solemnly promised to bring it back again that same evening.

Now it is in such a place as this that an English Clergyman would have a glorious field before him, he would not have to speak in a strange tongue to barbarians, nor like Paul at Athens to preach of an unknown God; for the devotees at the shrines of gold, drink, and all the other lusts of the flesh, do not at a new rush mask their devotion by hypocrisy, but plainly show forth the desires of their hearts. But those who succeed in such scenes in turning the hearts of the ungodly from the errors of their way, must be men of a peculiar stamp, willing to spend and be spent in their Master's service, and not looking for a reward in this world, they would have practically to learn that text, which I have never yet heard preached from,

"We might not be chargeable to any of you." But where are men rich, fervent, and eloquent, to be found, who are so filled with Christian faith as to give up England, where there are so many supernumeraries, and spend their lives amid such scenes; and yet the Apostles did like unto this, and surely in this age there are to be found some who as far as in them lies will imitate their example. Experience tells us that it is not so, for not only is there no Clergyman of the Church of England to be found at our new rushes, but in our settled districts there has been found the utmost difficulty in procuring Clergymen. The cause of this is not from any unwillingness on the part of the people to make suitable provision for their pastors, but from the extreme difficulty in getting the right sort of Clergymen to leave England. The colonists, as a body, care little for externals, perhaps they a little undervalue forms and ceremonies, thinking that when an undue preponderance is given to them they are

made to cover the absence of spiritual life, but they do want Clergymen who will preach fervently from the heart, and who rightly dividing the Word of God, will bring the truth home to their consciences. Our Clergyman at Sandhurst had never been to college, but in the first instance was sent out to the colony in some such capacity as Scripture reader. He officiated in the Church for some time as a simple deacon, he had a comfortable parsonage house, and received about eight hundred or a thousand a year from his living. In due course of time the Bishop laid his hands upon him, and he became a Clergyman of the Church of England. The cost of living was not much higher than it is in England, neither was he badly off for society, he had his brother clergy of different denominations, with a host of barristers, lawyers, doctors, bank managers, and other professionals settled in the neighbourhood. The gentleman of whom I speak, fairly earned his promotion, but to many young

curates languishing upon fifty pounds a year, and who have already spent a small fortune upon their college education, such a living would be a prize almost beyond their hopes. Then why don't they go and seek for themselves? is it that they do not care for the loaves and fishes? Few of them would venture to give that as the reason. The answer must be found in a different direction. Their brothers, as lawyers, doctors, farmers, physicians, or barristers, emigrate and struggle with the world, but the clergy are afraid to commit themselves, have learnt to depend upon others, and unless something is positively kept for them, will not move. It is found impossible to keep open a living on the other side of the world, and those who are present on the spot, having gone out in much humbler capacities, grasp prizes that under other circumstances they could never hope to obtain.

As Pleasant Creek became more settled, we on the contrary were more restless; neither of

us cared to confess that we were tired, and would gladly see new scenes; for my own part I had entered more into the affair from a love of adventure than the desire of making money, and now that the first excitement had gone off I longed to return to Sandhurst, to finish my arrangements for a visit to England. With my partner I thought perhaps it was different, but he was also weary of remaining, and wished to use his undoubted talents for business in a larger and more important sphere of usefulness. If we had been left alone, we might have remained for some time in ignorance of each other's feelings, but after having enjoyed the whole auctioneering business of the district for some two months, we were suddenly met by opposition. We played our part manfully against the intruders, talked of our patriotic feelings in supporting the town when yet in its infancy, the sacrifices we had made, the respectability attached to an old established concern like ours, and should doubtless have

triumphed in the end, had not one of our rivals who was an old campaigner at new rushes, stretched across the street an enormous flag with the words "Horse Bazaar, direct from Tattersalls," emblazoned thereon. We laughed and ridiculed this device, for making the new auctioneer known, at the same time our hearts were filled with envy, for from whence could we obtain such a flag? The only place was Melbourne; but then it would take time, a fortnight at least must elapse before we could spread it to the winds, in the meanwhile we felt sure that every stranger who had a horse to sell, would be caught by the gay appearance, and not knowing that we deserved his custom, would be led into the opposition establishment. Besides this, I had made up my mind that Pleasant Creek would never be a very large gold field, but it is so difficult to form a correct judgment of the extent and capabilities of any new mining district, that I kept this opinion to myself. I

saw that a great number shared my views ; the population had begun to decrease, and at the slightest hint of another new rush were ready to pull down their tents and stores, and be off.

There were many instances of this ; in one case, the news had come in that sixty miles off, at a place called the Black Lead, immense discoveries had been made. Several at once started off, and a great many pulled down the tents and stores, and packed up everything, waiting in the streets with their drays, all ready to start immediately they knew the right direction. In four or five days the first searchers returned half starved, having been met by others, who had found out that the rumour of an extensive rush had been produced by seeing one man sink a solitary hole. These various causes soon produced an explanation between myself and partner, and finding that we were both of one mind, in two days we had sold our office, disposed of the goodwill, packed up, and had several passengers ready to return to Sandhurst,

who, like ourselves, did not believe in the destiny of Pleasant Creek. By this time, I have no doubt that this little township has altogether changed, but similar scenes to those I have described will always take place at an extensive new rush. Before I leave this subject, I would drop a hint, particularly to new chums, not to be carried away by rumours of extraordinary yields of gold at any new gold field. Take, as an example, these two places, Mount Ararat and Pleasant Creek; at the first in particular, an enormous population was gathered together, in some cases expensive stores were built, stock to a large amount obtained from Melbourne, and upon all these transactions a very heavy loss must have accrued. Even those who had been long in the colony were deceived, they thought that the old gold fields must be done, and so strong was this feeling, that many of the people of Melbourne were willing to have the proposed railway to Sandhurst diverted so that it might be brought nearer to these new gold

fields ; fortunately they were not successful, and the escort returns prove how utterly mistaken their views were, for whilst Sandhurst, which is the town of Bendigo, sends down, in the year 1861, between six and seven thousand ounces of gold every week, Mount Ararat barely sends five hundred.

After four or five days unadventurous travel we reached Sandhurst, having been absent barely three months. The town had resumed very much its old business appearance, new buildings were going rapidly forward, and the population was nearly restored to its former number. But what changes had come over this town since I first put my foot in it, five years ago ! Then the Post Office was a tent, communication with Melbourne was had but once a week, the stores were built of canvass and slabs, the streets were full of stumps and holes, the pathways were unmade, the Church Service (often conducted by a layman) was held in a tent, the streets were left at night to mud and darkness, and

there was no local newspaper to declare the wants or aspirations of the people. But during the few years of my residence, the Post Office was first removed to a wooden and then to a handsome stone building, the postal delivery had been changed from once a week to a day and night mail; but the Post Office had only kept pace with the progress of Sandhurst, for the town, first dropping her canvass covering, took to wood, when finding that it was not a good wearing material, she discarded it, and came forth in all the graces of good brick and stone. A municipal council was established, stumps were removed, streets were levelled and lighted, pathways raised, curbed and flagged, arrangements made to bring pure water from a distance, and the town was regularly patrolled by a police force as excellent as that found in London. Four large churches had been erected, and five banks had established branches and built offices in a style that would have adorned a large provincial town in the old country. But

perhaps the greatest sign of prosperity was shown in the town supporting two daily and one weekly newspaper, neither are these of merely local importance, for they are read with attention throughout the colony. The business of the place had undergone as great a change; it had been the custom to simply double or treble the Melbourne prices, and to pack the goods away in shelves made of old boxes, but all this was changed, handsome shops had sprung up as if by magic, and it was now a trade of small profits and quick returns; its extent may be guessed, when one store that covers half an acre of ground, finds it too small to carry on its operations. At first, all the gold that was raised, at once took its departure to purchase necessities; now, much of it is kept floating in the district, for the diggings are surrounded by small farms, and where I at one time gave a hundred pounds a ton for oaten hay, it now can be bought for about eight, being grown in the district; and so with fruits and all farm

produce. Candles, soap, cider, and vinegar, are all made in the place, and besides this, there is brewed an enormous quantity of very tolerable ale; at one time all these things came from England, and the change has materially increased the population and resources of the town. Besides these, there are several other things, such as tanning, and the manufacture of earthenware, that the inhabitants believe will soon be carried on at a large profit in their neighbourhood. The town is still mainly dependant upon the mining population, but besides this support, it is the entrepot for an immense district, and when its railroad to the river Murray is carried out, its importance will be greatly increased. Even the mining has undergone a great change, for whereas at first it was only carried on by individuals digging in the alluvial earth, there are now large companies working in the solid rock, which seems as inexhaustible as our own tin mines in Cornwall. There were no steam engines, but now their

smoke, and the noise of stampers, may be seen or heard from nearly every gully, working morning, noon, and night. Cartage, which used to be so expensive and laborious a matter, has also seen its day; half the distance from Melbourne, right through the Black Forest, is opened up by a railway, and in the course of a few months the towns-people will have the pleasure of hearing the shrill whistle at their very doors, and the longest railway in Australia will connect Sandhurst with Melbourne.

Cobb's four-horse coach carried me down in a few hours to Melbourne. Here, everything was also changed; perhaps it was not so striking as at Sandhurst, but it was quite as great. The streets were filled by equipages of all sorts and character, many of them occupied by elegantly dressed ladies, who seemed, like their fair sisters at home, to be amusing themselves with the expensive luxury of shopping. The number of pedestrians was also very great, and the bustle and excitement were quite overpowering

to my up-country nerves. What struck me more than anything else, was the almost entire absence of the mining population; there was all the evidence of an active excitable commercial community, but amongst the throng that bustled along the crowded thoroughfares, hardly a representative of the mining class, that so lorded it in Melbourne during the early days of gold digging, could be seen. From the best streets, many of the old wooden houses had disappeared, and splendid stone buildings had taken their places. Collins and Great Burke streets had been magnificently designed, and when they are completely filled up with houses similar to those they are now building, there will be no street in London equal to them. Towards evening, the citizens retire to their suburban homes, at St. Kilda, Brighton, and many other charming little spots around the the bay, where they live in a style of luxury and comfort that would astonish many of their compeers at home. From the mining commu-

nity having so entirely deserted Melbourne, the public-houses had suffered greatly, several had failed, and excellent accommodation could be had at a very moderate charge. On Sundays, it almost seemed as if the town was deserted, everything was so quiet and orderly, indeed a vast number had left for their country houses. Even in disembarking for England, this constant change followed me. I had landed from a small dirty steamer, upon a few planks on the mud ; this site was now occupied by a fine quay, and I went down to Hobson's Bay in a railway, which runs so far into the sea that a ship of twelve hundred tons can lie alongside, and discharge her cargo into the railway trucks.

THE END.

E. F. GIRAUD, PRINTER, BEACH STREET, DEAL.

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